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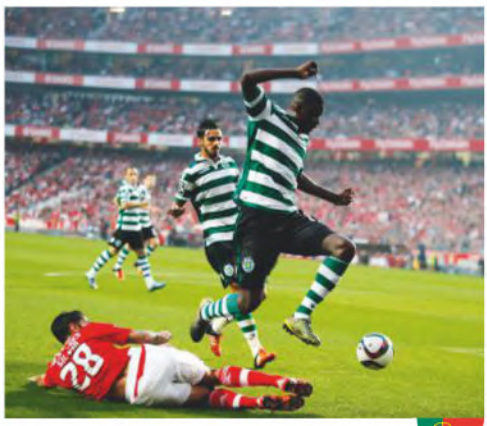

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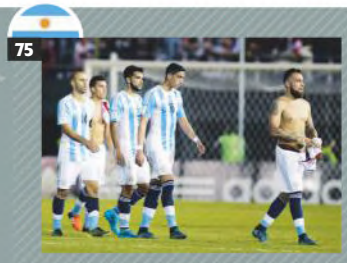

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RUSSIA...a Spartak Moscow fan lights a flare at the local derby with Lokomotiv

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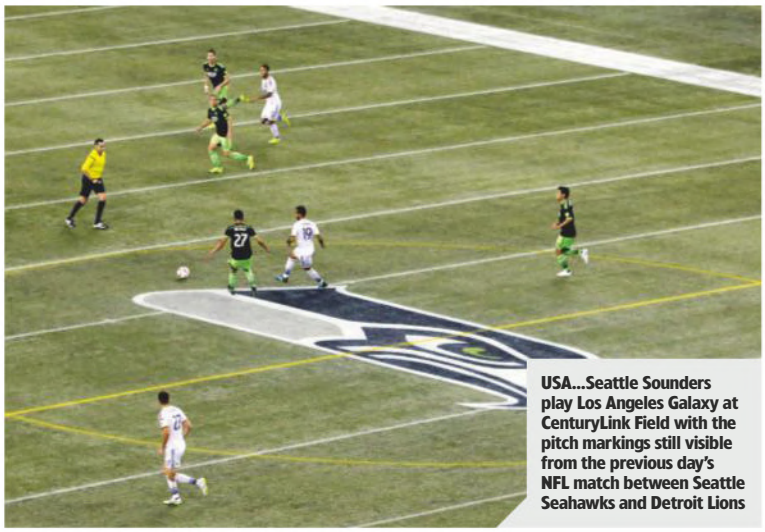

USA... Seattle Sounders play Los Angeles Galaxy at CenturyLink Field with the pitch markings still visible from the previous day's NFL match between Seattle Seahawks and Detroit Lions

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The impossible election

Seven contenders to replace Blatter

The nominations have closed in the FIFA presidential vote, which is scheduled to take place on February 26, 2016. The seven candidates face a difficult task in persuading FIFA's 209 members that they can reform the organisation. Keir Radnedge profiles the men in contention for FIFA's top job

JEROME CHAMPAGNE

French **Age:** 57 **Years in game:** 17 **Current position:** Consultant, including roles with the Palestine FA and the Kosovar Football Federation

Worked at FIFA for 11 years in senior roles including deputy general secretary before being forced out in January 2011. Tried to run last May but failed to obtain the necessary nominations.

"At a time when football is suffering along with our planet and society from the increasing level of inequalities, we have to assert the need to better control the globalisation of our sport. We must continue the efforts to improve the spectacle of elite football and, at the same time, reduce the inequalities for the benefit of everyone"

Building bridges..can FIFA dig itself out of a hole of its own making?

GIANNI INFANTINO

Swiss **Age:** 45 **Years in game:** 15
Status: UEFA general secretary (since 2009)

Joined UEFA in 2000 as a lawyer and secretary general of the International Centre for Sports Studies at the University of Neuchatel. Is one of UEFA's two delegates on the FIFA reform committee chaired by Francois Carrard.
"My manifesto will be based on the need for reform and also for a FIFA that genuinely serves the interests of all 209 national associations, big or small, and that puts football and football development at the top of its agenda"

MICHEL PLATINI

French **Age:** 60 **Years in game:** 43
Status: President of UEFA and vice-president of FIFA but currently under a 90-day provisional suspension from football by the FIFA ethics committee, pending the outcome of an investigation into his acceptance in 2011 of a "disloyal payment" from FIFA on Blatter's authority. Cannot campaign but may be allowed into the race if he clears his name before the election.

Enjoyed a stellar career as both player and then administrator. Starred for Nancy, Saint-Etienne and Juventus, and captained France to victory in Euro 84. Coached France between 1988 and 1992. From 1992 to 1998, he was co-president of the FIFA World Cup Organising Committee and vice-president of the French Football Federation from 2000. Worked as Blatter's "football counsellor" at FIFA from 1999 to 2002. Ousted Lennart Johansson to become UEFA president in 2007.
"I am the only candidate with such a broad view of the game. I would push key dossiers such as the regulation of transfers and the problem of TPO. Just as in UEFA, I would ensure greater democratic participation among the organisation's leadership. In the FIFA executive committee I would welcome representatives of the players and the clubs. I welcome reform proposals to clarify the role of the executive committee and to separate politics from the operational area"

SHEIKH SALMAN BIN EBRAHIM AL KHALIFA

Bahraini **Age:** 49 **Years in game:** 17
Current position: Asian Football Confederation president and FIFA vice-president.

Former head of the Bahrain FA and member of the ruling royal family. Led the committee which recommended switching the 2022 World Cup to the winter. Has consistently denied allegations linking him to the torture of national-team players involved in protests in 2011. Supported by Olympic powerbroker Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah, a new fellow member of the FIFA ExCo.
"I'm not looking to be an executive president. I think we have to bring the right people in, we have to bring the professionals to do the job. With the support I'm going to get we're going to turn it around very quickly. We have big examples of football organisations around the world – the Premier League, the Bundesliga, even UEFA who have a football side and a revenue side. This is what we want to bring to FIFA"

MUSA BILITY

Liberian **Age:** 48 **Years in game:** Five **Status:** Businessman and president of the Liberian FA

A somewhat surprise contender, and one who was disappointed to be denied the endorsement of the African confederation's executive committee. Was banned by CAF for six months in 2013 for the improper handling of confidential documents.

"If we are to change football we have to make sure that those who have been running FIFA for the last 20-25 years have nothing to do with it. Africa is the largest voting bloc in FIFA and we must take the lead to bring football together"

PRINCE ALI BIN AL HUSSEIN

Jordanian **Age:** 39 **Years in game:** 16 **Status:** President of Jordan Football Association and head of the Asian Football Development Project

Ousted South Korea's Chung Mong-joon as Asia's FIFA vice-president in 2011 with the support of Sepp Blatter, who he then antagonised when emerging as a reformist within the FIFA ExCo. Ousted last year by Sheikh Salman. Stood against Blatter in May, garnering 73 votes and denying him a first-round knockout victory before withdrawing.

"Last May I was the only person who dared to challenge Mr Blatter for the presidency. I ran because I believe that FIFA needs change – and I had the courage to fight for change when others were afraid. Football is hope. It is unity – and it is a powerful tool to make the world a better place. I do not believe that FIFA can give this sport back to the people of the world, without new leadership, untainted by the practices of the past"

TOKYO SEXWALE

South African **Age:** 62 **Years in game:** Seven **Status:** Businessman (mining millionaire)

For the past two years a consultant to FIFA's anti-discrimination task force, and chairman of the Palestine-Israel monitoring commission since June. An anti-apartheid campaigner – who spent 13 years on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela – and former government minister. Was a member of the bid team and the organising committee for the 2010 World Cup.

"FIFA, the organisation of the beautiful game, is damaged. The brand is severely undermined. I am going into this campaign as a candidate of my country with the confidence bestowed in me to make sure that we win. But win or lose people will know there was an African who was here who shook things up"

HOW IT WORKS

Before the vote on February 26, candidates must pass "integrity checks". If a candidate receives two-thirds of the 209 votes in the first ballot they will be declared the winner. If there is no two-thirds majority, the candidate with the lowest vote is eliminated and another vote held until one candidate has a majority of more than 50 per cent.

THE FAILURES

Missing out...(from left to right) David Nakhid, Chung Mong-joon, David Ginola, Ramon Vega and Zico

David Nakhid: Former Trinidad & Tobago international who submitted his five nominations but was then excluded by the electoral committee because the United States Virgin Islands had also nominated another contender.

Chung Mong-joon: South Korean billionaire who spent 17 years as a FIFA vice-president until 2011. His potential candidacy was halted after he was banned from football for six years by the FIFA ethics committee after events concerning the 2018-2022 World Cup bid process.

David Ginola (France), Ramon Vega (Switzerland) and Zico (Brazil) expressed an interest in standing but failed to obtain the necessary nominations.

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Blatter-Platini rift grows amid the rancour

Fallout...Blatter and Platini

Any thought that the provisional suspensions of Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini, plus the deadline for presidential nominations, would calm troubled waters at FIFA proved mistaken. If anything, the seas grew ever more turbulent with both Blatter and Platini going public with self-justifying, self-delusional interviews.

The simple reaction was to say, with Mercutio in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: "A plague o' both your houses." But in this case the house – "the mother house" as Platini likes to call FIFA – is here to stay and the challenge is both how and through whom solutions can be found.

Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah has commented that reform is more important than the identity of the next president, but this was being disingenuous. The two clearly go hand-in-hand. This also assumes there will be anybody left.

Blatter and Platini were suspended provisionally for 90 days by the ethics committee over allegations of financial misconduct. In Blatter's case this involved the issues which have already submitted him to criminal investigation by the Office of the Swiss Attorney-General: the under-valued selling of Caribbean World Cup TV rights to Jack Warner (in his CONCACAF dictatorship days) and the authorising of a "disloyal payment" of 2million Swiss Francs to Platini in 2011.

Platini's suspension was due to his acceptance of the SFr2m. which he claimed was for work undertaken for FIFA between 1999 and 2002. He has yet to come up with a plausible explanation for the nine-year delay in demanding payment.

Blatter had boasted for so long about the creation of the independent ethics committee; indeed, he had always made a point of using the word "independent". He had not expected it to be independent enough, of course, to suspend him – though one assumes he found consolation in seeing Platini dragged down with him.

> Blatter, despite his suspension, will continue to pull strings

Simultaneously, ethics judge Hans-Joachim Eckert was being kept busy by other alleged miscreants as Warner was, justifiably if belatedly, banned from football; Chung Mong-joon was taken out of the presidential race by a six-year ban arising out of the 2018-2022 bid inquiry; and there were 90-day provisional suspensions for FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke (earlier "relieved of his duties" by Blatter over other financial issues) and Thailand's Worawi Makudi.

Also under investigation are Franz Beckenbauer and Spain's long-serving federation president Angel Maria Villar Llona, as well as Ricardo Teixeira (Brazil), Amos Adamu (Nigeria) and Nicolas Leoz (Paraguay), plus two of the "Zurich Seven" in Jeffrey Webb (Cayman Islands) and Eugenio Figueredo (Uruguay). Webb is already back in the US and on bail after denying all charges in the FIFAgate investigation, and so too is ex-CBF president Jose Maria Marin, whose "negotiations" with the FBI explain why his successor, Marco Polo Del Nero, is frightened to leave the unextraditable safety of Brazil.

The five remaining members of the Zurich Seven have been cleared for extradition but are appealing to the Swiss High Court.

In the meantime, plans for the presidential election on February 26 continue, and so does the work of the reform committee under Swiss lawyer Francois Carrard. A limit of three four-year terms for the president (but not the ExCo) has found favour, plus an age limit of 74 and full transparency on pay. The ExCo will decide in early December on a package to set before the extraordinary congress.

Seven contenders were accepted into the election process – though Platini only if he clears his name in time.

No obvious favourite stood out. Prince Ali will presumably lack European support this time; Sheikh Salman will be hammered all the way by human rights groups; Jerome Champagne (by far the deepest thinker about the game and the challenges ahead) may be perceived as having been too close to Blatter for too long; Gianni Infantino is clearly a stand-in for his boss; Musa Bility has ruffled some regional feathers in Africa; which leaves Tokyo Sexwale as a possible compromise candidate somewhere down the line.

Blatter, despite his suspension, will continue to pull strings and call in favours in between his paranoid rants about everyone being against him – the US, England, UEFA, the European Parliament, Michel Platini and even (horror of horrors!) his own ethics committee.

Eckert & co were supposed to clean up the rest of the game, not him. Here, at least then, was a glimmer of hope. WS

FROM THE EDITOR

We have lots of great football stories this month. From the Euro 2016 qualifiers, there has been the high of Albania (page 34) and the low of Holland (page 82). We've witnessed Mexico's defeat of the USA (pages 76 and 78), and we have a terrific interview with Barcelona's man of the moment, Ivan Rakitic (page 50).

But once again we find ourselves having to report on the ongoing meltdown at FIFA, where the increasingly delusional ramblings of Sepp Blatter (aged 79 and three-quarters) have provided yet another reason for us to welcome his departure in February.

We have headlined our feature on the presidential contest (page 10) as "The impossible election" because whoever wins – and let's be honest, none of the seven candidates truly convinces – the internal structures of FIFA have proved wholly resistant to change.

> An outsider with no baggage is exactly what FIFA requires if there is to be any chance of serious change

The requirement that presidential candidates have at least two years' involvement in football has ruled out any external candidates. Yet an outsider with no baggage is exactly what FIFA requires if there is to be any chance of serious change.

It is a challenge for a monthly publication – whether paper or iPad – to stay in touch with all the events at FIFA. But don't forget our regular updates and analysis at worldsoccer.com.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

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10 Jorge Jesus guides Sporting Lisbon to win over former club Benfica ..... page 42

GERMANY

DFB fights claims 2006 vote was bought with slush fund

No World Cup award this century has escaped the taint of deep suspicion and political connivance.

- South Korea's securing of co-host rights with Japan for 2002 owed everything to a European-endorsed political ambush of then FIFA president Joao Havelange.
- South Africa's 2010 success hedged about with bribery allegations concerning a $10million payment via FIFA to CONCACAF boss Jack Warner's so-called "African diaspora" (cash he divvied up with CONCACAF's two other voters).
- Brazil's Ricardo Teixeira profiting in 2014 from staging matches in far more venues than was necessary.
- And as for 2018 and 2022, investigations will still be running when Russia stages its opening match.

Accused...DFB president Wolfgang Niersbach

To this backdrop, further murky details have crawled out from beneath the German football federation's stone about how it obtained 2006.

Reputations sullied so far include Franz Beckenbauer, current German FA (DFB) president Wolfgang Niersbach, his predecessor Theo Zwanziger, long-serving former general secretary Horst R Schmidt, and Robert Louis-Dreyfus, the late former owner of World Cup sponsor Adidas.

Unproven suspicions have long hung over activities of the German bid

"Without a doubt there was a slush fund linked to the German World Cup application... the way I see it, Niersbach is lying"

Former German FA president Theo Zwanziger (right) attacks his successor, Wolfgang Niersbach

Exposed...German magazine *Der Spiegel*

Under investigation...Blatter (left) and Beckenbauer

committee which Beckenbauer headed.

These included Bayern Munich (where he was president) playing friendlies in countries to generate TV rights for FIFA ExCo voters. Then there was the flight for home of Oceania president Charlie Dempsey before the final round of voting. This subsequently tallied up 12-11 to Germany and Dempsey's lost vote meant Blatter could not use his casting ballot which would have been destined for South Africa. Now it has emerged that when the Germans launched their bid, Louis-Dreyfus loaned Beckenbauer's bid committee the equivalent of €6.7million as seed funding in a private rather than directly corporate capacity.

A year before the finals he asked for his money back. A letter uncovered by news magazine *Der Spiegel* purports to show that FIFA was asked to repay the money via the cover of a "cultural programme" to a Louis-Dreyfus bank account in Geneva.

This promoted panic in the DFB. Niersbach revealed he had found out about a mystery payment last June but had omitted to tell the rest of the DFB board and had only now initiated an inquiry. He rejected *Spiegel* suggestions that the money had been used as a slush fund to buy votes. So did Beckenbauer.

However, both men said such a payment – of, conveniently, a similar amount – had been facilitated to FIFA to guarantee the provision of a €170m grant towards World Cup staging costs.

Zwanziger, who has been engaged in a running feud with Niersbach since being ousted by him from the DFB in 2013 and subsequently from the FIFA and UEFA executive committees, has insisted there was a slush fund and that Niersbach and Der Kaiser knew about it. .

Slush or not, certainly a lot more dirt.

Keir Radnedge

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"Despite several attempts, it was not possible to get everyone back together in one line"

Heerenveen put out a statement announcing the resignation of the Dutch club's entire board of directors

HOLLAND

Cruyff to undergo treatment for lung cancer

Below par...Johan Cruyff playing golf last month

Johan Cruyff has been diagnosed with lung cancer, his former club Ajax have confirmed.

Ajax director Edwin Van der Sar said on the club's website: "We have had contact with his manager, Carole Thate, and she confirmed to us that Johan indeed has lung cancer.

"It has just been discovered, so they could not yet provide much more information. On behalf of the club, I wish Johan and his family a lot of strength and a speedy recovery."

Cruyff, 68, was a heavy smoker prior to double heart bypass surgery in 1991, after which he took to sucking lollipops on the touchline while coach of Barcelona. He retired from management in 1996 but remains an important figure behind the scenes at his former clubs Ajax and Barcelona.

Having lived in Spain for many years, Cruyff took part in an anti-smoking commercial in which he said football had given him everything but that smoking had taken almost everything away.

Cheer...Barcelona wear T-shirts in support of Cruyff

HEROES & VILLAINS

JOSH MAGENNIS

The Kilmarnock forward, who was a reserve keeper for Cardiff City in the 2012 League Cup Final at Wembley, replaced suspended Kyle Lafferty for Northern Ireland's home Euro 2016 qualifier against Greece and scored the decisive second goal.

For keeps...Magennis secures place at finals

ELVIN MAMADOV

The Qarabag midfielder deliberately missed a penalty during an Azerbaijan league game because he thought the referee's award of the spot-kick had been wrong.

GARY NEVILLE & RYAN GIGGS

The former Manchester United players allowed homeless squatters to remain over the winter in a property they are developing into a luxury hotel in the city.

MIKE GRELLA

The New York Red Bulls midfielder became the fastest goalscorer in MLS history, finding the net after just seven seconds of the game against Philadelphia Union. It bettered, by one second, Tim Cahill's effort, also for Red Bulls, against Houston Dynamo in 2013.

Quick...Mike Grella needed just seven seconds to score

ABDULLAH QASSEM

The United Arab Emirates player was jailed for three months after insulting national coach Mahdi Ali with indecent gestures in a video.

JOHANNES GEIS

The Schalke midfielder got a five-match ban for stamping on Borussia Monchengladbach's Andre Hahn in their Bundesliga clash.

Off...Johannes Geis (no5) sees red for his challenge

NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM

Former Manchester City defender Sun Jihai became only the 37th person – alongside the likes of Bobby Moore, Bill Shankly and Eric Cantona – to be inducted in the museum's hall of fame... on the same day that Chinese state president Xi Jinping visited Manchester with UK prime minister David Cameron.

Own goal...Sun Jihai (second right) is inducted

GEIR THORSTEINSSON

The Iceland FA president, who was UEFA's match delegate at the recent Manchester City v Sevilla Champions League game, reported City supporters for booing the Champions League anthem – an "offence" that could lead to a disciplinary fine.

"I keep looking at the table. You never normally spell Wales with a Q"

National manager Chris Coleman marvels at his team's qualification for Euro 2016

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://po.st/I2gEew

1 MATT RITCHIE
Scotland v Poland
Strikes a powerful left-foot shot on the turn that flies into the top corner during a 2016 European Championship qualifying game at Hampden.

2 ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI
Poland v Republic of Ireland
Of the many goals the Bayern Munich striker has scored this term, this diving header for his country was the one that has probably meant the most so far as it secured Poland's qualification for next summer's Euro 2016 finals.

3 SEBASTIAN GIOVINCO
Toronto v New York Red Bulls
Twists and turns before scoring with a fine left-foot shot.

4 LUCAS PEREZ
Deportivo La Coruna v Athletic Bilbao
Flicks up a cross with his heel before producing a superb turn and volley to score in the far corner.

5 AHMED HASSAN
Braga v Marseille
A delightful chip over the goalkeeper to put his team in front in the Europa League.

6 ALEXANDRE PATO
Sao Paulo v Coritiba
Plays a one-two before checking back and curling a left-foot shot into the top corner.

WINNERS

ALBANIA
Reached a major tournament for the first time, at the 23rd attempt, when qualifying for next summer's Euro 2016 finals.

NORTHERN IRELAND
Topped their European Championship qualifying group to make it to a major tournament for the first time since the 1986 World Cup.

DINAMO ZAGREB
The reigning Croatian champions managed a 50th consecutive game unbeaten in the league.

AL AHLY
The holders from Egypt were knocked out of the African Confederations Cup semi-finals after letting a two-goal lead slip at home to Orlando Pirates.

ARGENTINA & BRAZIL
Were both beaten on the same World Cup qualifying matchday for the first time.

HOLLAND
Failed to qualify for the Euros for the first time since 1984 and miss out on a major finals for the first time since the 2002 World Cup.

LOSERS

"I don't worry about a player's age. All I'm interested in is whether they are good or not"

Milan coach Sinisa Mihajlovic hands a first-team debut to 16-year-old keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma

Notebook

Highlights from some of our regular on-line contributions

SOUTH AMERICA

So perhaps next year's Centenary Copa America will go ahead after all.

The tournament to celebrate 100 years since the first Copa in 1916, and featuring the 10 South American nations plus six from CONCACAF, is scheduled to take place in the USA next June, but has run into an obvious problem.

Rather than being just a FIFA scandal, all those arrests in a Swiss hotel at the end of May could also be described as a local affair: a tale of corruption involving TV rights in the Americas – the very terrain of the proposed tournament.

Unravelling all the legal aspects has not been easy, but CONMEBOL has said it is ripping up its contract with Datisa, the TV company formed by a merger of all those firms whose name has come up in the connection with recent events.

An executive committee has been formed to take care of next year's Copa, comprising two representatives each from CONMEBOL and CONCACAF, and one from US Soccer. Their task is to choose venues and sort out the organisational side within just over seven months.

Tim Vickery

Holders...Chile (in red) beat Argentina in this summer's Copa America Final

GERMANY

Overachieving small-town teams with limited playing resources often find it tough to combine the Europa League with domestic obligations, and that certainly seems to be the case for Augsburg, who in a few short months have gone from fifth-place last season to dysfunctional bottom of the Bundesliga pile this term.

With fixtures coming thick and fast, Markus Weinzierl's side do not seem as fresh and resourceful as they were last year, and not as defensively switched-on or sharp going forward. Essentially, they have been worked out.

Rather than allow Augsburg to play on the counter, opponents are letting them have the ball – and Weinzierl's side have lacked the guile to break sides down.

"*Die Fuggerstadter*" may have to forget about Europe. Bundesliga survival is all that matters.

Nick Bidwell

Not a priority...Augsburg celebrate scoring against AZ in the Europa League

Confident...Mihajlovic says he can turn Milan around

ITALY

According to Giovanni Trapattoni, there are only two types of football coaches: those who have been sacked and those who will be sacked.

Right now, Milan's Sinisa Mihajlovic might have good reason to reflect on Trapattoni's home-spun philosophy. After nine Serie A games, Milan languished in mid-table, much to the dismay of their hardcore fans. That, in itself, was enough to prompt media speculation that maybe the folk at Milanello have already lost faith in this season's new leader.

A 2-1 win over Sassuolo, with goals from Carlos Bacca and Luiz Adriano, took the pressure off Mihajlovic for a while, but it will not have been lost on the Serb coach that, for the first time in three months, club owner Silvio Berlusconi turned up at the training ground to rally the troops.

That same day, Mihajlovic opted to "get his retaliation in first", claiming he was the man to get Milan season's back on track, before adding: "If I don't succeed, you're going to need an exorcist around here".

Paddy Agnew

Weekly notes from Brazil, Spain, Germany and Italy at **worldsoccer.com**

"I'm ready to take charge of a national team. I don't want Dunga's place yet, but if the phone rings I'll come running"

Former Brazil full-back Roberto Carlos

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

EUROPE

Ex-Italy coach **ROBERTO DONADONI** succeeded Delio Rossi after he was sacked by Serie A strugglers Bologna.

Dutchman **HUUB STEVENS** replaced Markus Gisdol at Bundesliga strugglers Hoffenheim, who will appoint 28-year-old **JULIAN NAGELSMANN** at the end of the season. Currently in charge of the club's under-19 side and studying for his senior licence, Nagelsmann will become the Bundesliga's youngest ever coach.

Kop man...Jurgen Klopp gets his point across to his new charges

Liverpool turn to Klopp

Former Borussia Dortmund boss **JURGEN KLOPP** replaced Brendan Rodgers as manager of Liverpool, while **SAM ALLARDYCE** took over from Dick Advocaat at Sunderland.

QUIQUE SETIEN replaced Paco Herrera as coach of La Liga strugglers Las Palmas, while **RUBI** took over from Lucas Alcaraz at Levante after a 4-0 home loss to Real Sociedad.

Ahead of the winter transfer window that opens in January, Roma made permanent the loan signings of **EDIN DZEKO** and **MOHAMED SALAH**, from Manchester City and Chelsea respectively.

Start...Stefan Effenberg (centre) at Paderborn

More than a decade after the end of his playing career, former Germany international midfielder **STEFAN EFFENBERG** was handed his first coaching job, taking charge of second-tier Paderborn.

STANISLAV CHERCHESOV, who left Dynamo Moscow in July, replaced Henning Berg as coach of Legia Warsaw with the side 10 points behind the leaders in the Polish league.

Former Finland coach **MIXU PAATELAINEN** was appointed manager of Dundee United, replacing Jackie McNamara, with the side bottom of the Scottish Premiership.

Former England centre-forward **CARLTON COLE**, who was released by West Ham United in the summer, has joined Scottish champions Celtic on a two-year deal.

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER, who coached Molde to the league title in 2011 and 2012, took charge of the Norwegian club for a second time.

Former Belgium boss **GEORGES LEEKENS** returned for a third stint with strugglers Lokeren, who parted company with Bob Peeters.

Northern Ireland's record goalscorer **DAVID HEALY**, who found the net 36 times during his 95 international games, was given his first managerial job, in charge of Linfield.

Capped 100 times by his country before retiring last year, **LEVAN KOBIASHVILI** was elected president of the Georgian Football Federation.

SOUTH AMERICA

Goias' appointment of **DANNY SERGIO** means only three Brazilian clubs have the coach with which they started the season.

CONCACAF

Colombian **JUAN CARLOS OSORIO** resigned as coach of Brazilian side Sao Paulo to take charge of Mexico.

Former USA international **EARNIE STEWART** will take over as sporting director of Philadelphia Union in January.

AFRICA

Portuguese coach **JOSE PESEIRO** replaced Fathi Mabrouk as coach of Egypt's Al Ahly.

Cameroon's most capped player of all time with 137, **RIGOBERT SONG** was appointed coach of Chad's national team, replacing Emmanuel Tregoat.

Experience...Rigobert Song is in charge of Chad

ASIA

Former Guangzhou Evergrande coach and Italy captain **FABIO CANNAVARO** took charge of Saudi Arabian side Al Nassr.

"It helps pulmonary circulation, it enables the heart to pump more blood, it creates more oxygen."

Independiente club doctor Luis Chiaradia on plans to give the Argentinian club's players Viagra before a Sudamericana Cup match against Santa Fe of Colombia

Appointments, sackings and loans

OUT

EUROPE

TIM SHERWOOD was sacked as Aston Villa manager following a defeat against Swansea City that left his side languishing in the Premier League relegation zone.

Former France striker **DJIBRIL CISSE,** who was released by Bastia at the end of last season, has retired at the age of 34.

Failure...Eli Guttman left after Isreal missed out

Lithuania's **IGORIS PANKRATJEVAS** quit after the 3-0 loss to England, while Israel coach **ELI GUTTMAN** resigned after his side's failure to qualify for Euro 2016.

TRAIANOS DELLAS resigned as coach of AEK Athens after they lost 4-0 at Olympiakos in the Greek Super League.

VLADICA PETROVIC was sacked by Drina Zvornik, who were bottom of the Bosnian Premier League, but only found out via the club's Facebook page.

AFRICA

VINCENT ENYEAMA, Nigeria's most-capped player, and Super Eagles striker **EMMANUEL EMENIKE** have both retired from international football.

ASIA

English coach **PETER TAYLOR** was sacked by Kerala Blasters after a disappointing start to this year's Indian Super League campaign.

Raul calls time on 21-year career

Former Real Madrid and Spain forward **RAUL** has announced his retirement as a player.

The 38-year-old, who left Real Madrid in 2010 as the club's all-time leading goal-scorer, had spells with German club Schalke and Qatar's Al Sadd Sports Club before signing for New York Cosmos of the North American Soccer League, the tier below Major League Soccer, last year.

"When I signed for the New York Cosmos in December, I said I would evaluate how I felt towards the end of the year and assess whether I would continue to play," Raul said. "My decision is to retire from playing at the end of this season. I am fully focused on finishing the season strong and helping the New York Cosmos win the NASL championship. In the coming months I will decide the next step in my career.

"Playing has been part of my life for so long. The decision to retire is not an easy one but I believe it's the right time."

Star...Raul finished his career with the Cosmos in New York

OBITUARIES

Howard KENDALL (1946-2015)

The former Everton manager, who guided the club to league titles in 1985 and 1987, has died at the age of 69. Kendall played more than 200 times for Everton, winning the title in 1970 as part of the famous "Holy Trinity" along with Alan Ball and Colin Harvey, and in his six years as manager, between 1981 and 1987, he won the FA Cup and the European Cup-winners Cup in addition to those league titles. He had two further spells with the club, along with stints at Blackburn Rovers, Manchester City, Athletic Bilbao, Notts County and Sheffield United.

Kendall's former players were quick to pay tribute, with Gary Lineker, who signed for Everton after their title success in 1985, tweeting: "Saddened to hear that Howard Kendall has passed away. Brilliantly managed the best club side I ever played for at Everton. Great bloke."

Brian Glanville adds: The sad death of the splendid Howard Kendall takes me back to two back-to-back European fixtures in 1985. In Rotterdam for Everton's 3-1 victory over Rapid Vienna in the Cup-winners Cup Final, the only misdemeanour I saw was when an Everton fan walked out of the restaurant where I was lunching berating the bill.

What a shocking contrast with the drunken violence of the Liverpool supporters in Brussels the following week at the European Cup Final versus Juventus.

The FA did public penance with a five-year ban from Europe on all English clubs. Collective punishment, that ugly phenomenon. Liverpool deserved a ban. Everton, who had won the Championship (the real one) under the excellent Kendall, was among the many other clubs which didn't. Those five years of banishment did great harm to English football.

Meanwhile, such splendid memories of Kendall, who was the youngest player ever in an FA Cup Final, for Preston in 1964, but was never capped.

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Why MLS plays in the summer... and other American oddities

Off...New York Red Bulls' attempts to clear snow from the pitch for their 2012 play-off with DC United were in vain

We're at that time of the year when Major League Soccer's season climaxes and its critics enjoy themselves by picking it to pieces. Prominent among those are the Eurosnobs, a rather boring but quite loud subset of the larger "nerds and know-alls" group.

The Eurosnobs don't like MLS because it doesn't do things the way they are done in Europe. Northern-hemisphere teams play in the autumn and winter and everyone knows it. But MLS plays in the summer and the Eurosnobs are greatly put out as they see this as an affront to the natural order. Even though these people live in the USA – and most are American – they seem unaware of the unique problems soccer faces in their country.

In the US, big-time professional sport – which means baseball, gridiron football, basketball and ice hockey – has the whole year sewn up. There is simply no time when soccer can be played without going up against a competing pro sport. No established football country faces such a situation.

MLS has worked out – just as North American Soccer League did before – that summer is the best period for a soccer season, when their main challenger is baseball. Soccer can survive against baseball, the wisdom goes. But that's not quite as neat as it sounds. MLS growth – it started in 1996 with 10 teams and now has 20 – means more games and a longer season. The current campaign began on March 6 and will not end until the MLS Cup Final on December 6.

Playing the Final in December raises another problem: cold weather. Given the vast range of temperatures in this huge country, it should be possible to avoid playing the Final in northern cities. But in 2012 MLS abandoned its policy of playing the Final in a predetermined – and usually warm – city. Instead, it is now played at the home of one of the finalists.

> "In the US, there is no time soccer can be played without going up against a competing pro sport"

If that happens to be California's Los Angeles Galaxy or Florida's Orlando City, warm weather can be guaranteed. This year Galaxy were one of the favourites to reach the Final. But so too were the New York Red Bulls, while Toronto, New England Revolution and Montreal Impact were also candidates. All of those venues would be cold, possibly very cold, maybe even with snow.

That's another reason for playing in summer: the northern winter in the USA would make the frozen-hard pitches at up to nine of the northern MLS clubs simply unusable. And when you're trying to introduce the great American public to the beauty and delight of soccer, frostbite and chilblains should not be part of the deal.

Closed, centrally heated stadia could be an answer, and maybe one day MLS will lead the sport in that direction, but that's not going to happen for quite a while.

And there is something else that MLS does not do that annoys outsiders. With no promotion and relegation, the Eurosnobs have convinced themselves that the game will not take off in the USA until there is. But the system does not exist in other American pro sports and would simply not work in MLS.

If an investor coughs up, say, $100million to buy a franchise, they do not expect to be told that, if the team does not do well in its first year, they will have to play in the second division against rinky-dink opponents. Such a scenario would mean waving goodbye to many potential investors.

But MLS keeps the excitement alive with its play-off system. The top six teams in the Eastern and Western Conferences play within their divisions to come up with a sub-champion, and the two then meet in the MLS Cup Final.

In place of a relegation battle there is the struggle to claim the fifth and sixth play-off berths – a mini-battle that this year went down to the final day of the season in both conferences.

The system works well, though it does have what the Eurosnobs regard as a fatal flaw: the team leading on points at the end of the regular season, which would be declared the champions under European procedure, has to enter the play-offs.

An attempt to honour the points winner is made by awarding them the Supporters' Shield, but this is really a non-event. And in the 20 MLS championships so far played, the top-points teams have won the MLS Cup only six times. WS

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AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

From 16 to 24: expanding the Euros has revitalised the competition

Critics of the expansion of the European Championship into a 24-team tournament – and there have been many of us – argued that one of the problems of the new set-up was the certainty of qualification that it would deliver to all the major nations.

It would be impossible to fail, so it was said, thus depriving the qualifying groups of the tension and intrigue that is vital to the enjoyment of sport.

Well, the demise of Holland has proved the sceptics wrong. They finished a meagre fourth in Group A and could not save themselves in the safety net of the play-offs.

Their implosion has been an astonishing fall from grace for a country that played in the World Cup Final of 2010 and reached the semi-finals in 2014.

Internal trauma can sometimes affect the Dutch, and certainly they had self-inflicted wounds, but that doesn't fully explain what has occurred here.

Holland's downfall was also due, in part, to the remarkable progress made by Iceland. Despite a tiny population of just 320,000 their national side fashioned triumphs home and away against Robin Van Persie and his fellow orange superstars.

Iceland have been deserving architects of their own rise to glory rather than merely fortunate recipients of Dutch decay. A decade of investment in high-level coaching and high-tech indoor pitches have helped develop a generation of exceptional talent that includes Gylfi Sigurdsson and Alfred Finnbogason.

In the past, due to the extremes of climate, they could play football for barely five months in and around Reykjavik, and the best youngsters always went abroad early. Now, an enviable system makes them punch well above their weight.

> Iceland have been deserving architects of their own rise to glory

Equally crucial for the Icelanders has been the psychological change provided by the Euro 2016 system. Opening up the tournament provided an opportunity for realistic ambition rather than hopeless dreaming – especially when they had the good sense to employ experienced Swedish coach Lars Lagerback.

This was always part of the rationale of UEFA – and Iceland are not the only small and traditionally disregarded country to reap the benefits.

Upset...Iceland salute their supporters after a shock qualifying victory away to Holland in Amsterdam

The same incentive has inspired a resurgence of both Wales and Northern Ireland, while Albania – under the watchful eye of Italian coach Gianni De Biasi, who was once of Torino and Udinese – have also qualified for their first major tournament

De Biasi started his reign in 2011, convinced about the merits of a young group of talented players, and vindication came with a qualifying group victory against Portugal and triumph in a friendly against France. Eventually, they qualified automatically, courtesy of a goalless draw away to Denmark.

For Wales, it will also be a first participation in a European Championship tournament, while their one and only World Cup finals appearance was in the sepia-tinted era of 1958. It can only be to the tournament's benefit to see the world's most expensive player, Gareth Bale, in action. He will go where legends such as Ryan Giggs, Mark Hughes and Ian Rush all failed.

If UEFA had kept to the old 16-team format, Iceland, Albania and Wales would all have missed out on automatic qualification, with no guarantee against being eliminated in the play-offs.

Under the previous format, the lid could have been kept on the upstart outsiders – as the Champions League does so ruthlessly and as some critics would have preferred.

Instead, the progress of the minnows has been met mostly with delight and they will add a welcome new flavour to Euro 2016. Their success will also serve to inspire others who have never qualified, such as Finland and Georgia.

The 24-team tournament in France next summer will have its issues, but one of them cannot be the accusation that the competition is cluttered up by no-hopers.

Anyone who believes that Iceland, Albania or Wales will be pushovers could be in for a rude awakening – just like the nonplussed stars of Holland. WS

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THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Mourinho: out of ideas and running out of time

Lonely figure...Jose Mourinho (back row, right) watches from the back of the directors' box after being sent to the stands at Upton Park

Some managers come and go. Even, it seems, may Jose Mourinho. Certainly it would cost Chelsea a fortune if he went so soon after signing a £30million, four-year contract, but then even such sums as this scarcely perturb Chelsea's billionaire owner Roman Abramovich who, of course, has sacked Mourinho before.

Against West Ham United, Mourinho's "crime" was not only that Chelsea lost, but they lost playing dire, destructive football. And then there was the umpteenth clash with a referee, this one going on down the tunnel at half-time and involving a reported volley of abuse, followed by Mourinho's banishment to the stands.

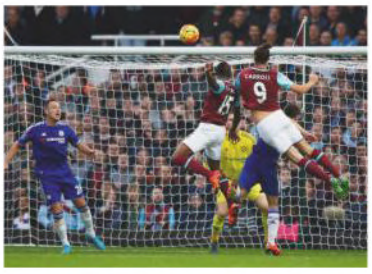
Chelsea's sudden catastrophic decline this season has reminded one that even last season, when they so commandingly won the Premier League, there were signs of potential decay. Not least in the European Cup, the greatest prize of all, when they were eliminated at Stamford Bridge by a Paris Saint-Germain team controversially reduced to 10 men by the disputable expulsion of Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

> Mourinho's various triumphs testify to his undoubted talents. But plots can be lost, judgements may fail

Mourinho's various triumphs with Portuguese, Italian and Spanish clubs testify to his undoubted talents. But plots can be lost, judgement may fail.

Look at Alf Ramsey, without whose guidance and inspiration England would never have won the 1966 World Cup. Yet by the early 1970s he had so clearly lost his way, the nadir coming in 1972 with the two-legged European Championship quarter-final against the Germans. In the first leg, at Wembley, England had no ball winner in midfield, enabling Gunter Netzer to run riot. In the return, Ramsey made no real effort to chase the two-goal deficit, choosing what might politely be termed a team of hard men. After a bleak goalless draw, Netzer declared: "The whole England team has autographed my leg."

Mourinho has certainly not resorted to that kind of dour selection, but he seems unable now to inspire his players.



Blue gloom...Andy Carroll gets West Ham's winner

Stanley Rous...from FA Cup Final referee to FIFA president

Rous set the standard

As I've said often enough before, football on the international scene is ineptly incompetent at running its own affairs. This was exemplified by the fact that whatever the malfeasances of Sepp Blatter, his predecessor Joao Havelange remained in office from 1974 to 1998, effectively unopposed for all his massive greed and chicanery, retiring with an estimated $30million at the very least. It reminds one yet again of the words of the 18th-century political philosopher Edmund Burke: "For evil to triumph, it is enough for good men to do nothing."

Passivity deplorably ruled for all those years and Havelange flourished like the green bay tree. Alas, there was no FBI then to do what should have been done. Once Stanley Rous had been deviously and corruptly ousted in his FIFA presidency by Havelange, villainy ruled.

Neither in FIFA's presidency, all too plainly, nor even at the Football Association, has there ever been a proper successor to Rous. I do not mean to edify him, but he was principled, honest and an excellent administrator who had the good of the game at heart.

During his 28-year reign as secretary of the Football Association, which he became soon after refereeing the 1934 FA Cup Final, he himself re-wrote the laws of the game and, for better or worse, brought the British countries back into the ranks of FIFA.

He was, and arguably all to the good, an autocratic figure and something of a snob. It was he who kept Walter Winterbottom in office as England's team manager for an astonishing and excessive 16 years, despite offering the role to Jesse Carver – a secret that I kept for many years.

FIFA candidates sink without trace

As FIFA thresh around to find a new president, putting temporarily in the chair none other than Issa Hayatou, who has a record as long as your arm, one potential candidate after another lurks on the horizon only to disappear.

Sheikh Salman from Bahrain seemed to be talking a good game until he was impugned for supposed complicity in the maltreatment of civil protesters. Now a new candidate, South African Tokyo Sexwale, has emerged, who perhaps may be elected by default. He could hardly be worse than the previous two incumbents.

UEFA's Gianni Infantino? Uninspiring. Meanwhile, we learn Franz Beckenbauer and the Spaniard Angel Maria Villar Llona have been "the subjects of proceedings" with the others over the bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

Apparently, Beckenbauer and Llona face no charges over their behaviour in the actual bidding process. This, though an exhaustive *Sunday Times* FIFA investigation published a witness statement – so far unchallenged – that Beckenbauer had been paid by the Russians, while his meetings with Qatari representatives have been duly chronicled.

Under investigation... Franz Beckenbauer

Rabbatts right, Chelsea wrong

The lingering case of former Chelsea doctor Eva Carneiro simply will not fade away. Now it has involved the estimable Heather Rabbatts, who well deserves a focal place in the FA's otherwise all male and, in the immortal words of its chairman Greg Dyke, otherwise "hideously white" hierarchy.

Where Ms Rabbatts was absolutely right was to question the casual and peremptory way in which an FA alleged investigation decided that Mourinho had no case to answer for allegedly abusing Dr Carneira. He was accused of yelling at the Gibraltarian the Portuguese words *"filha da puta"*, meaning "daughter of a whore". The FA inquiry trotted out an expert who declared that what he had said was *"filho da puta"*, meaning son of a whore. Which in context made no sense whatsoever and was in any case contradicted by several Portuguese speakers who had heard the words.

Speaking out... Heather Rabbatts has attacked the FA's handling of the Carneiro case

I need hardly remind you that in running on to the field to tend a prone Eden Hazard – very late in the game, but so what? – Dr Carneira, who had actually been called on by the referee, had no alternative but to comply.

That Mourinho should so frequently whinge and whine about the way the FA have treated him and his behaviour, while being so controversially let off so serious a charge, seems ludicrous to a degree. And Dr Carneira wasn't even interviewed.

Just as ludicrous is the perverse behaviour of two senior FA councillors, the elderly Ron Barston and Richard Tur, who have absurdly demanded an inquiry into Ms Rabbatts' impeccable behaviour, insisting she has breached FA rules. Which brings echoes of the Dickensian character Mr Bumble who opined memorably: "If the law supposes that, then the law is an ass."

Good to know that Dr Carneira is suing Chelsea for effectively forcing her out of a job she was doing conscientiously and well. Mourinho should never have been allowed to treat her so badly without sanction.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

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eyewitness

Steve Menary reports from Yerevan

ARMENIA

Rock bottom and going nowhere fast

Domestic game struggling in post-Soviet era

Alyosha Abrahamyan is a regular spectator at Ararat Yerevan games, but these days there is little left that one of Armenia's greatest-ever goalkeepers can recognise.

In 1973, Abrahamyan was in goal as Ararat won the Soviet league-and-cup double, and the following season they reached the European Cup quarter-finals. A 70,000 crowd saw them beat Bayern Munich 1-0, before the Germans edged through 2-1 on aggregate and went on to win the European Cup.

Four decades on and independence from the Soviet Union has done little for football in Armenia. Abrahamyan is now Ararat's goalkeeping coach but, after multiple changes of ownership and financial failures, the club is unrecognisable from the one he played for.

The crowds have gone too. Abrahamyan is one of barely 100 people watching as Ararat fall behind to bottom-of-the-table Ulisses. American midfielder Bryan De la Fuente scores two fine second-half goals to rescue a win, but the match – like most in the Armenian Premier League – is a desultory affair.

De la Fuente tries to talk up Armenian football. "The crowds are small but they are loyal," he says without a flicker of irony. Previously, he played in MLS for the now defunct Chivas USA, but he admits his second season in Armenia will be his last.

Dilapidated...Alashkert's rundown home stadium

After the game, a handful of young Armenian web journalists surround Ararat coach Varuzhan Sukiasyan for a quote as the tiny crowd quickly vanishes into the Yerevan night.

After his side finished bottom of the table last season, Sukiasyan is under pressure to make improvements, but expectations are low at Ararat and in the wider Armenian domestic game.

In the 2014 World Cup qualifiers, the national side came within a match of making the play-offs. But despite the success of Henrikh Mkhitaryan at Borussia Dortmund, they have since struggled and coach Bernard Challandes left this summer.

That brief international success masked a domestic game at its lowest ebb.

In the 2014-15 Champions League, Banants were humiliatingly knocked out in the first qualifying round by FC Santa Coloma of Andorra. No Andorran side had ever won a Champions League tie before.

Armenian football is nearly at rock bottom. In UEFA's 2016-17 access list, the Armenian Premier League is only ranked above Andorra, San Marino and Gibraltar – places where the club game is amateur or part-time at best and only three teams qualify for Europe.

The implications for Armenian football of falling any lower are dire.

At present, half of the eight APL clubs

Close...Henrikh Mkhitaryan (left) in a 2014 World Cup qualifier

Leaders...Alashkert (in yellow) and Pyunik

> "The league itself is not competitive. The interest is not big"
> **Hayk Karapetyan, Football Federation of Armenia**

qualify for European competition, which offers the only real source of outside funding for club owners such as Bagrat Navoyan of Alashkert, as running an APL club costs up to €2million a season.

A local travel agent, Navoyan took the brave if not foolhardy step of setting up a new club in 2012, with the club named after the village – in what is now Turkey – that his Armenian grandparents fled from to escape Turkish genocide a century ago.

This season, Alashkert made their European debut, but after beating Scotland's St Johnstone they fell in the second qualifying round of the Europa

Sparse...few fans watch Alashkert

League to Kazakhstan's Kairat. The €10,000 they earned may be small change for Europe's elite, but not in Armenia.

Sitting in the Yerevan office of his company Bagratours, Navoyan leans back in his chair to show where Alashkert's funding comes from. "Here," he says, patting the wallet in his trouser pocket.

He claims to have had offers from Belarus and Scotland of €100,000 for striker Mihran Manasyan, but he is holding out for more.

If Manasyan does get sold, it will be something of a watershed.

Some overseas players in Armenia can earn up to $5,000 a month but most locals average $1,000. Many are seeking an exit, but Armenians, with the exception of Mkhitaryan and a handful of others, are not in demand.

This summer, a host of Armenian players went for trials in search of a professional contract overseas but not one of them succeeded.

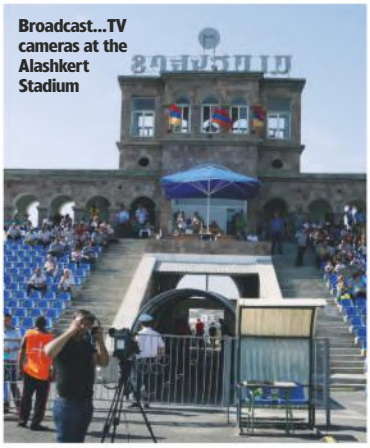
"No one is trying to speak about the quality," sighs veteran journalist Zaven Vardanyan, who has been covering Armenian football for decades and believes the game is at its lowest ebb.

At least those players still have clubs at home. A few years ago, the APL shrank to just eight sides after four teams – Cement

Ararat Town, Kilikia Yerevan, Zenith Yerevan and Yerevan United – were suddenly closed down. Before this season kicked off, Mika and Ulisses both came close to folding.

There is no market for players from such a low-grade league, nor any other source of income for club owners such as Navoyan.

When second-place Alashkert host leaders Pyunik in Yerevan, Armenian Public Television belatedly agrees to screen the game. However, they stipulate that this will only happen if the kick-off is shifted back by an hour. And even then



Broadcast...TV cameras at the Alashkert Stadium

there is no fee for Navoyan.

More than 300 people turn up to watch Pyunik ease home 4-1. Yet there is not even compensation of money from the gate for Alashkert who, like all APL clubs from Yerevan, do not charge for entry.

"The league itself is not competitive. The interest is not big," admits Hayk Karapetyan, media officer at the Football Federation of Armenia (AFF).

Only a madman would contemplate starting up a club in this financial environment but Navoyan, like many of the Armenians who are involved in domestic football, prefers to think of himself as a patriot. "To improve Armenian football, I try to take my players from Armenia and I take just three players from overseas," he says proudly.

Struggling...Ararat (in white) and Ulisses

The only rule on foreign players is that APL clubs must have an Armenian goalkeeper. National keeper Roman Berezovsky, who is the country's second-most capped player of all time, was 40 when he finally retired this summer and the rule was brought in by the AFF in an attempt to give game time to potential successors.

With no limit on outfield players, clubs such as Mika and Ulisses use a swathe of overseas players from places as diverse as the USA, Brazil, Peru, Congo, Cameroon, Mali and Nigeria.

Scout...Khoren Kalayshan

Armenian football is a free-for-all with agents using the game as a last resort, but many of these agencies are not even based in Armenia. One of the biggest, Bucket Group, which represents Manasyan, is based in Serbia. Talent scout Khoren Kalayshan works across Eastern Europe but he does live in Yerevan and, like Navoyan, views himself as a patriot – and on a mission.

Over the last century, Armenians have

FIVE KEY FIGURES IN ARMENIAN FOOTBALL

RUBEN HAYRAPETYAN
AFF president implicated in a number of violent incidents, including the death in 2012 of a military doctor, Vahe Avetyan.

ROMAN BEREZOVSKY
Armenia's second-most capped player retired this summer and is now goalkeeping coach with Dynamo Moscow.

SARGIS HOVSEPYAN
With 131 caps, he is the country's most capped player and was interim coach after Bernard Challandes left this summer.

HENRIKH MKHITARYAN
National team captain, the attacking midfielder was dogged with injury in 2014-15 but is finding his form this season.

BAGRAT NAVOYAN
Runs the Bagratours travel agency and funds Alashkert, who are challenging Pyunik's dominance of the local club scene.

suffered the Turkish genocide, the suffocating blanket of communism, the 1988 Spitak earthquake and a war in 1992 with neighbouring Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh.

Millions left in search of a better life, but three million people still live in Armenia, with two or even three times that number living abroad.

Kalayshan is scouring the diaspora for players and has brought more than half a dozen youngsters to the attention of the AFF – including CSKA Moscow teenager Grigori Emeksuzyan, who was born in Sochi to Armenian emigres, and David Martirosyan of Czech side Teplice.

Despite the financial absurdity of the Armenian club game, Kalayshan points to the transformation of Kazakh domestic football and argues for more investment.

"There are only eight teams and they play each other four times; for the players, I don't think it is so interesting," he says.

"The persons who are investing in Armenian football are heroes. They get the money from their business and put it into football. There is no income. To think of income is ridiculous. First you must invest. The Armenian Premier League needs 10 or 12 clubs."

Kalayshan is quick to praise not just the owners but also AFF president, Ruben Hayrapetyan. In power for more than a decade, Hayrapetyan controls Armenian football unchallenged due to his political connections.

Loyal...a supporter of Ararat

Tom Jones, an Englishman who was assistant to Armenia coach Ian Porterfield until the ex-Chelsea manager's death in 2007, remembers Hayrapetyan as a remote figure who did not deign to speak to underlings. "You couldn't just go and speak to him," says Jones.

Hayrapetyan is widely believed to control Pyunik, whose claim of third-party ownership on Mkhitaryan deterred the likes of Liverpool when the player sought to leave Shakhtar Donetsk in 2013.

> "The persons who are investing in Armenian football are heroes"
> **Armenian agent Khoren Kalayshan**

Hayrapetyan was the sole candidate in the last AFF presidential election. With close connections to the government, he is unlikely to face a challenge in the next elections despite Armenian club football hitting rock bottom. WS

Armenia: 2015 PREMIER LEAGUE
THE CLUBS

ALASHKERT
Only formed in 2012, they qualified for this season's Europa League. Owner Bagrat Navoyan recently bought the crumbling Nairi Stadium, which has been renamed the Alashkert Stadium.

ARARAT YEREVAN
The country's best-known outfit are the same in name only to the team that won the Soviet league-and-cup double in 1973. The current club is owned by expats Hratch Kaprielan and Vardan Srmakesh, who live in the USA and Switzerland respectively. Ararat play at the Republic Stadium but finished bottom of the league last season and continue to struggle.

BANANTS
The original club was formed in 1992 and after an ill-fated merger with Kotayk of Abovyan, Banants split in 2001 and moved to Yerevan. Now owned by billionaire industrialist Oleg Mkrtcyhan, who is Armenia's richest man and has held stakes in Ukrainian side Metalurh Donetsk and Kuban Krasnodar of Russia.

GANDZASAR
One of two clubs from the provinces, the Kapan-based side were founded in 2002 and are owned by copper magnate Maxim Hakubyan. They were second from bottom last term.

MIKA
Traditionally a heavy user of overseas talent, the club is part of Russian-based expat Michael Baghdasarov's Mika Corporation, whose interests include a chain of petrol stations.

PYUNIK
Winner of 13 titles, including 10 in a row up to 2011-12. Champions again in 2014-15 and on course to retain the title this season, they play at the Republic Stadium. Sanvel Hayrapetyan is nominal chairman to satisfy UEFA rules but his father Ruben, who is the president of the Football Federation of Armenia, controls the club.

SHIRAK
Founded in 1958 and based in Gyumri, the club is owned by politician Arman Sahakyan. They have won the Premier League four times, most recently in 2012-13, and finished third in 2014-15.

ULISSES
A heavy user of overseas players, the Yerevan-based club won the 2012-13 title but have no real fan base and came close to folding this summer. Owner Genrikh Kazanjian, who controls the Holiday Group, looks to be selling up.

eyewitness

James Montague reports from Tirana

ALBANIA

Qualification against all odds

Albania may have lost to bitter rivals Serbia, but they still made it to Euro 2016

It certainly looked and felt as if the greatest opportunity in the national team's history had slipped through their fingers. The final whistle had just been blown at a drenched Elbasan Arena and Albania had been beaten 2-0 by Serbia in their penultimate Euro 2016 qualification game.

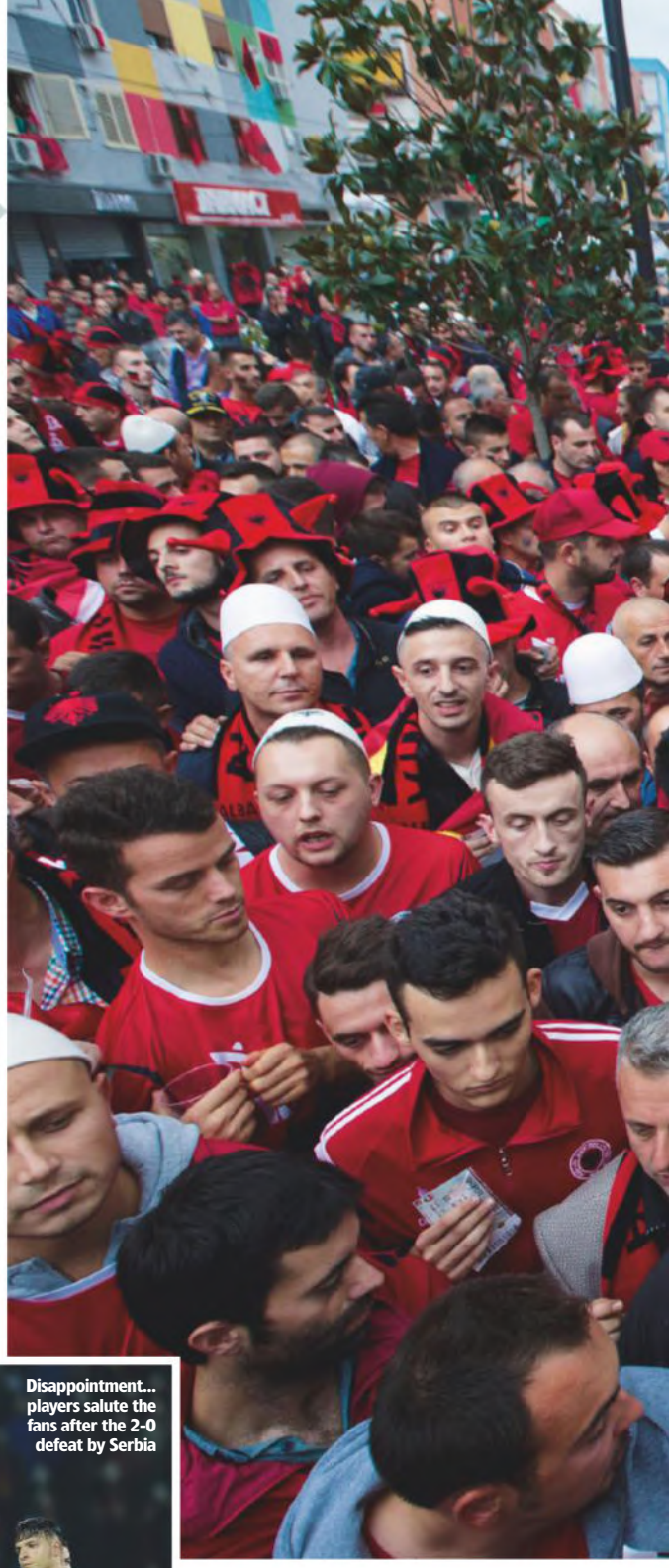
Most of Albania's players were laying on their backs, distraught, as Serbia celebrated victory in what had become a match dominated by international politics and history as much as football.

On paper, Serbia had nothing to play for. Yet the manner of their failure to qualify for France next summer was tinged with a sense of injustice. They had effectively been eliminated following the reverse fixture last year, when violence broke out after a drone was flown into the Partizan Stadium carrying a banner festooned with Albanian nationalist symbols.

The match was abandoned, Albania were awarded the three points and Serbia docked a further three – after an unsuccessful trip to the Court of Arbitration for Sport – for failing to control their fans. But with a bad taste enduring from that match, added to an already combustible atmosphere – due to the rivalry between the two nations that came to the fore following the 1999 Kosovo War, which pitted the majority ethnic Albanian Kosovars against the Serbs – the match was always more than simply a dead rubber.

In pure footballing terms, at least, Albania did have something to play for. The Balkan country had enjoyed a superb 2016 European Championship qualification campaign which had brought them to the verge of reaching their first-ever finals of a major tournament.

All they needed, with results going their way, was victory against Serbia. Instead, in a match played under the kind of security reserved for dictatorships arranging a military parade of ballistic missiles, Serbia broke away and scored twice in injury time, leaving the crowd silent and the Albanian players bereft. Serbia's players and officials celebrated as if they had won the whole tournament itself.



Disappointment... players salute the fans after the 2-0 defeat by Serbia

"We approached the last minutes trying to keep my players focused," said Albania's captain, Lorik Cana, after the game. "We knew we had the opportunity to qualify tonight. We wanted to reach qualification tonight, in our land, in front of our people."

All was not yet lost, however. There would be one last chance, against Armenia in Yerevan three days later.

Few had given Albania much of a

Anticipation... Albania fans enter the Elbasan Arena

chance when the draw for Euro 2016 qualification was made. Despite the newly expanded format opening up new routes for smaller nations, Portugal, Denmark and Serbia appeared, on paper at least, too strong a triumvirate to break.

A nation of just two million people, Albania had always produced talented players, at least from its diaspora.

Following the region's periodic wars, pockets of ethnic Albanians live across the Balkans – from Kosovo and Macedonia to Serbia and beyond, not to mention those that resettled in Switzerland, the USA, Italy and France.

Over the past decades many ethnic

Security...police search a fan outside the stadium before the Serbia game

Albanians have chosen to represent their adopted homes. Take Switzerland's national side for example.

Xherdan Shaqiri was born in Kosovo and even wears an Albanian flag on his boots, yet he plays internationally for the Swiss. And he has been joined in that decision by Granit Xhaka, Blerim Dzemaili and Valon Behrami – all of whom consider themselves to be ethnic Albanians.

But the current Albania team is a mix of diaspora players who, in many cases, chose to represent the country of their parents' birth, mixed with some old hands. Granit's Swiss-born brother Taulant Xhaka chose to represent Albania rather than

Switzerland. Close to half the current team were born or have roots in Kosovo, including Lazio goalkeeper Etrit Berisha, who was born there. And then there is skipper Cana, who was born in Kosovo but fled during the disintegration of Yugoslavia to become a refugee in Switzerland.

An opening fixture away to Portugal was the toughest first step towards the Euro finals imaginable for Albania's Italian coach, Gianni De Biasi. But a stunning 1-0 victory thanks to a goal from Bekim Balaj, followed by two draws with Denmark and a victory at home to Armenia, gave the team the perfect platform for an unlikely shot at qualification.

Yet it was the game in Belgrade that would define both Albania and Serbia's qualification campaigns.

Tensions were already high in the Partizan Stadium during the match; flares were thrown onto the pitch, and chants of "Kosovo is Serbia" and "Kill the Albanians" could already be heard from the crowd when, in the 42nd minute, a drone entered the stadium.

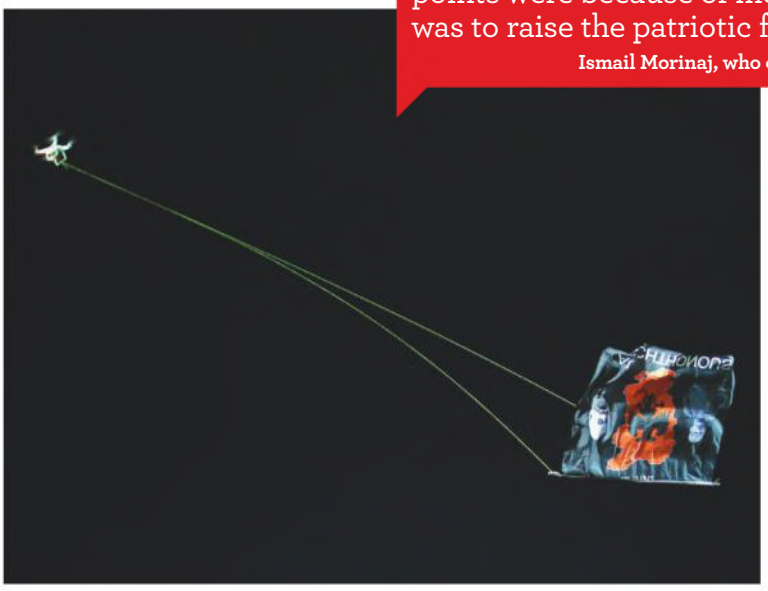
When Serbian defender Stefan Mitrovic tried to take the flag down, it sparked a confrontation on the pitch that ended with the Albania players fleeing to the tunnel under a hail of objects and fists as some of the crowd came onto the pitch.

"When we saw the fans on the pitch attacking us, this was something completely out of control," recalled Cana. "I was really scared for my players, to be honest, because I could see that they were coming from everywhere. [Aleksandar] Kolarov and [Serbia captain Branislav] Ivanovic, they really tried to protect us.

"If they hadn't tried to do that then we would have been in a big mess."

At first, the brother of Albanian prime minister Edi Rama was blamed for flying the drone. Cana described how all the Albanian players' bags were searched by Serbian authorities looking for the remote control.

> "Too many people say the three points were because of me. What I did was to raise the patriotic feelings"
>
> **Ismail Morinaj, who operated the drone**



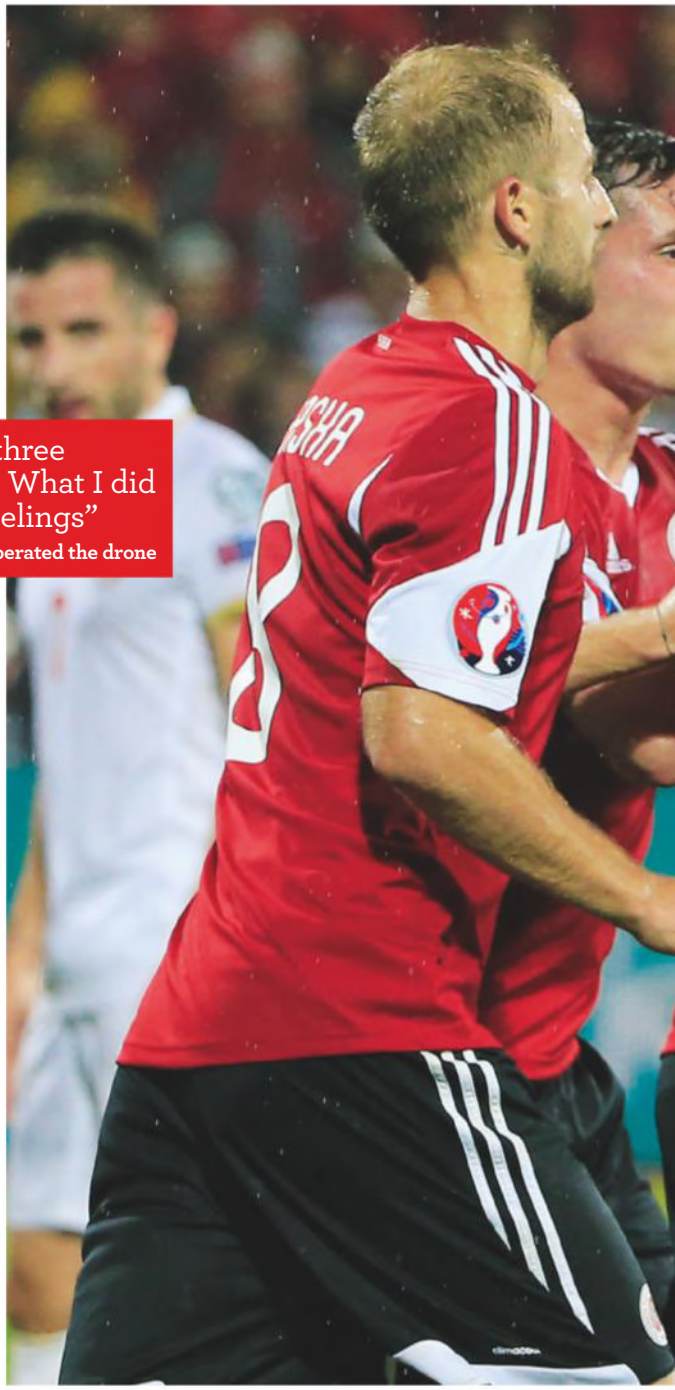
Flashpoint...a drone towing a flag bearing a pro-Albanian sentiment flies over the Partizan Stadium

In the end, it wasn't the brother of the Albanian PM, nor one of the players who were responsible. It was a 33-year-old crane operator Ismail Morinaj, who had concocted the plan and was flying the drone from a nearby cathedral tower.

"When the drone and flag entered the stadium, there was 20 seconds of silence," Morinaj said in an interview shortly before the return match in Elbasan.

Morinaj's role in Albania's Euro qualification can not be overlooked. He is considered something of a national hero now and, although he vehemently claims he didn't want to inflame the situation, it is hard to argue that the banner did not set an already combustible atmosphere inside the Partizan Stadium alight.

National hero...Ismail Morinaj (with scarf) at the qualifier against Denmark



Clash...Serbia's Adem Ljajic is confronted by three Albania players

The three points awarded to Albania were vital going into the final games – and they also helped eliminate their greatest rivals for a play-off spot.

"Too many people say that the three points were because of you, but I don't think so," said Morinaj. "Our players went to Portugal and won. We drew in Denmark.

"I can say that what I did was to raise the patriotic feelings."

As the return match against Serbia approached, the authorities took no

chances with the security and, shortly after our interview, Morinaj – who had admitted to carrying a gun for protection because of the sheer number of death threats he received from Serbian Facebook accounts – was arrested.

The road to Elbasan from the capital Tirana was closed for nine hours before kick-off and snipers could be seen on the buildings surrounding the stadium, ready to shoot down any revenge drones that dared to fly close by. Five hundred special forces and 2,000 police officers patrolled outside the ground with water cannon and tear-gas canisters.

In the end, there was no trouble, even though, as torrential rain fell, Serbia snatched a late, late victory. The supporters of Albania's national team – the "Red and Black", who had chanted for the release of Morinaj throughout the game – left quietly. The streets of Elbasan were empty within an hour.

Cana looked on the bright side and said: "We still have a massive chance to win in Armenia and reach the qualification. Sometimes, the more difficult things are, the more beautiful things are."

In the end, the Armenia game was surprisingly straightforward. Albania ran out 3-0 winners and secured their place in France next summer. As hard as this campaign has been, qualification might be considerably harder in the future.

Celebration... Kosovo Albanians take to the streets

It is likely that Kosovo, after a lengthy campaign, will be recognised by UEFA and FIFA early next year, with the Football Federation of Kosovo convinced that they will be admitted in time to join qualification for the 2018 World Cup. If that happens, it would likely cut off what has become an important supply line of talent for the Albanian national team.

But no one was thinking about that after the Armenia game. As tens of thousands celebrated in Tirana, Paris and Zurich, Cana and his team-mates were invited to the Albanian Prime Minister's residence in front of cheering crowds, greeted as returning heroes.

Meanwhile, Ismail Morinaj, Albania's forgotten hero, remains in jail. WS

Heroes...prime minister Edi Rama greets the team on their return from Armenia

eyewitness

Keir Radnedge reports from Istanbul

TURKEY

Battle of the 'Big Three'

The rivalry between Istanbul's leading clubs continues against a backdrop of scandal and corruption

Heat, passion, tension and big money. Once upon a time, Turkish football was considered an also-ran on the European stage. The national team, infamously, could not cope with away-game pressure and never qualified for the big tournaments, while club sides had history but little else.

Now, however, over the past two decades, everything has changed.

There are no easy games against Turkish teams any more, with Galatasaray and Fenerbahce boasting training grounds that are the envy of many of western Europe's bigger and more internationally successful clubs. These days, big-name players head for the Super Lig in expectation of far more than a last-contract pay day.

Absent from the finals of the World Cup and European Championship since reaching the last four at Euro 2008, the national side will be strutting its stuff in France this summer, while the country's leading clubs strive to prove themselves in the Champions and Europa Leagues.

Europa campaign...Gokhan Tore of Besiktas

All this comes against a highly complex political backdrop which has seen Turkey drawn ever more into international focus – which is perhaps inevitable for a country whose borders stretch from Bulgaria and Greece to the west, right across the continental divide to Georgia and Iran in the east, and then on Syria and Iraq to the south.

Entangled are long-drawn-out negotiations about moving closer to ▸

Passion...Besiktas fans celebrate a goal against Albanian side Skenderbeu in the Europa League

Derby day...Fenerbahce's Lazar Markovic hurdles a challenge from Hakan Balta of Galatasaray

Loyal...Galatasaray supporters get in the mood for the derby with Besiktas

"the west" through proposals for European Union membership, which are set against the internal tensions prompted by the increasingly authoritarian ambitions of president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party.

Rumbling in the background is unrest over corruption talk which has produced regular tidal flows in first one direction and then another, and left no sector of Turkish society untouched; not even football.

The three biggest Turkish clubs continue to dominate domestically: recent league leaders Besiktas, defending champions Galatasaray and Fenerbahce, who are deemed the most popular and independent of the three. Abroad, Besiktas made a steady start in the Europa League, while Galatasaray revived hopes of Champions League progress with a 2-1 win at home to Benfica after conceding a 90-second opening goal.

Fenerbahce made an initial muddle of their own Europa League campaign, but they also have serious issues with European competition and UEFA which continue to cast a long shadow of resentment over every game.

In 2012, Fener president Aziz Yildirim, a multi-millionaire developer, was sentenced to jail and fined $560,000 for conspiracy and match-fixing during the 2010-2011 season. The match-fix case was a sensation, partly because it appeared to prove what rivals had regularly claimed, and partly because of its extent.

A year earlier, police raids on homes and football club premises led to 61 arrests in connection with 19 matches in the top two divisions – with those 61 including officials from Fenerbahce and Besiktas.

Accusations focused on 26 cases in the top two Turkish divisions as well as others in basketball. Fenerbahce links were alleged in 15 of the 19 top-flight cases, of which five concerned the grey area issue of so-called "third-party bonuses".

In August 2011, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) barred Fenerbahce from the Champions League and gave their place to their rivals, Trabzonspor. UEFA duly banned Fener from European competition for two years and Besiktas for one season.

Fenerbahce went to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and demanded €45million compensation from UEFA. But before the case could come before sport's supreme court, UEFA flew to Istanbul for its annual congress. President Michel Platini suggested to Erdogan that the domestic stand-off was an embarrassment for European football and did the image of the Turkish game no favours at an increasingly delicate time, politically.

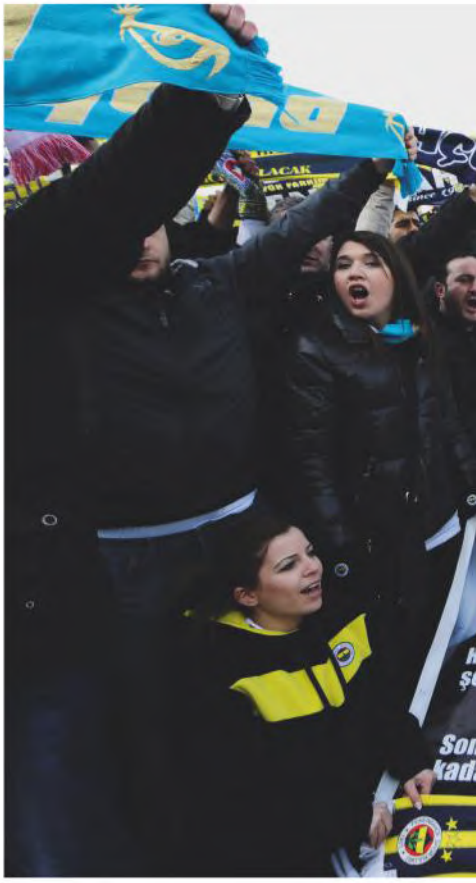
Suddenly, Fenerbahce withdrew its CAS appeal amid reports that the TFF would cough up most of the €45m. Simultaneously, an internal TFF report effectively cleared the club of wrongdoing.

Fenerbahce supporters claimed the case had been manipulated by political and commercial rivals of both Yildirim and the club itself, while Yıldırım insisted the match-fixing case was a politically motivated plot hatched by followers of the influential United States-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen. Prosecutors countered that the case arose as a consequence of investigations prompted by the Bochum football corruption trial in Germany.

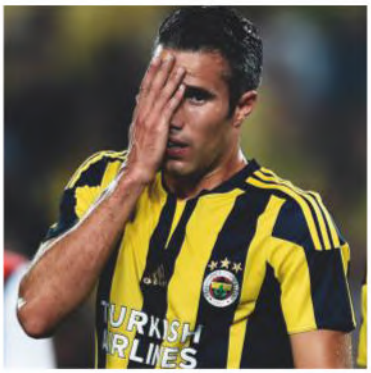
On a wider sports scale, the scandal and confusion cast a fatal pall across Istanbul's bid to win hosting rights for the 2020 Olympic Games and/or the finals of that year's European Championship. The Olympics would be awarded to Tokyo, while Platini devised his pan-continental Euro 2020 plan as a reaction to the lack of a trusted candidate.

> "Either everything is perfect or it is terrible"
> **Fenerbahce coach Vitor Pereira on Turkish passion for football**

Pressure...Fenerbahce fans demonstrate in support of president Aziz Yildrim



Conflict with coach...Robin Van Persie



After a year in prison, Yildirim was freed in 2012 pending a retrial. Meanwhile, the hated "Special Court" system under which he had been convicted was scrapped. In October 2015, he and his fellow defendants were cleared of all charges.

Not that this is the end of the matter. Fenerbahce are still considering a lawsuit against UEFA and Platini for damages. Anger towards Platini was raised to fever pitch by the Swiss justice authorities' investigation of UEFA's president for accepting the now-infamous "disloyal payment" from FIFA authorised by Sepp Blatter on the basis of a verbal contract.

The heat generated by football in Turkey has come as a shock to Fenerbahce's Portuguese coach Vitor Pereira. Coping with language problems on the training pitch was one problem, but greater than that was the passion-driven impatience.

"I always thought that in Portugal we were very emotional," says Pereira. "But when I came to Turkey, I found that they are even more emotional and passionate about football than us. Either everything is perfect or it is terrible.

"In Portugal we play our football with 50 per cent heart and 50 per cent head. But here, it's 80 per cent heart and only about 20 per cent tactical stuff. This means that sometimes in defence we lose our balance because, under pressure, the players forget all our tactical planning. Fenerbahce have made a huge investment in new players but it takes time to cook the food to get the taste I want. We have too many national-team breaks when all our players go away for a week.

"I want us to play a passing game, dominating possession, but I haven't been able to build the team I want as quickly as I want - and we haven't been providing the results and level of performance the fans want. Time is short and we always need results. I came with a two-year project in my mind but here, for the fans, the project is only the next game."

That demand for instant success led to tension between Pereira and Robin Van Persie. The Dutchman arrived from Manchester United to a hero's welcome in the summer, but the fitness issues which dogged his last season at Old Trafford have followed him to Turkey, with he and Pereira disagreeing over how and when he should be used, creating more negative headlines.

"No one likes to be on the bench, especially when, even if you are 30 or 31 or 32 or 33, you still have your ambition," said Pereira. "So I prefer a player to be angry. Sometimes conflict between players and the coach is a problem but often it's a good sign. Football is competitive. You have to try to prove every day to the coach that you are the best player."

Like Pereira at Fener, Hamza Hamzaoglu of Galatasaray and Besiktas' Senol Gunes will be judged by their results in the derby games and then – if they make it that far – where their clubs stand at the end of the season.

Patience does not come into it, and Pereira's eyes were opened by his first few days in Istanbul after arriving from a double-winning success in Greece with Olympiakos.

"The first week was incredible," said the 47-year-old. "I couldn't walk down the street. When the people here like a coach or a player it's amazing. Here they have football in the blood. When they are born, when they are babes in arms, it's already there. It's wonderful but it also creates problems because the passion is all about the next game. Then the next, then the next..."

And, for a coach, the next job. WS

THE BIG 3

GALATASARAY
Founded: 1905
League champions 20 (record)
Turkish Cup winners 16 (record)
UEFA Cup winners 2000
UEFA Super Cup winners 2000
Stadium: Turk Telecom Arena (52,652)

FENERBAHCE
Founded: 1907
League champions 19
Turkish Cup winners 6
Stadium: Sukru Saracoglu (53,715)

BESIKTAS
Founded: 1903
League champions 13
Turkish Cup winners 9
Stadium: Vodafone Arena (41,903)

eyewitness

Tom Kundert reports from Lisbon

PORTUGAL

Jesus triumphs on return to Estadio da Luz

Sporting coach humiliates his former club Benfica in Lisbon's 'eternal derby'

A more categorical triumph was impossible to imagine. On October 25, Sporting made the short three-mile trip to neighbours Benfica and swept to victory in one of the most keenly anticipated Lisbon derbies in decades.

The 3-0 winning margin was an accurate reflection of the difference between the two sides. It was Sporting's first Primeira Liga win at their rival's home since 2006 and their biggest margin of victory there since the 1947-48 season.

For Benfica, the notion that history was being made in a negative sense only added to the sense of despair, and an increasing certainty on a rainy Sunday afternoon for the vast majority of the 65,000 crowd: the club's decision to let coach Jorge Jesus go, and above all to their bitter local rivals, was a blunder of catastrophic proportions.

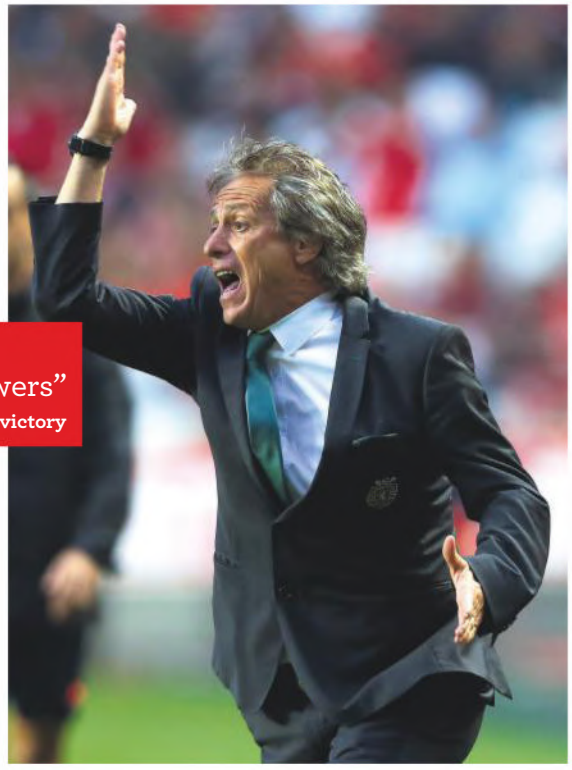
The lead-up to the game had inevitably centred on Jesus, the controversial and charismatic coach who had crossed the great divide after six success-strewn years at Benfica. It had also involved mudslinging of the highest order. Sporting's irascible president Bruno de Carvalho had launched a tirade of daily attacks against Benfica in the media, accusing them of routinely attempting to bribe referees by offering them a generous array of gifts before matches.

> "I didn't expect them to applaud me or give me flowers"
> **Jorge Jesus after the 3-0 victory**

The Eagles responded by announcing they were suing Jorge Jesus for €14 million for starting work at Sporting while still under contract at Benfica, and for taking confidential software with him when switching from the Luz to the Alvalade.

The bad blood between the clubs is unlikely to be cleansed any time soon, but on the pitch there was only one winner.

From the moment Teofilo Gutierrez pounced to give Sporting the lead in the 9th minute, the visiting side exuded total dominance. A brilliant Islam Slimani header and a Bryan Ruiz goal made it 3-0 after only 36 minutes. No further goals were added, yet the Lions' second-half performance was just as impressive, completely controlling proceedings against a listless Benfica unable to cope with the midfield stranglehold exercised by Sporting's magnificent trio of home-grown talents William Carvalho, Adrien Silva and Joao Mario.



Derby success...Sporting boss Jorge Jesus

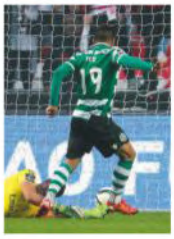
"If you'd have asked me before the game if we'd win 3-0 I'd have said no, but if you'd have asked me if we'd win I would have said yes," was one of Jesus's more modest comments in the post-match press conference.

Never needing encouragement to blow his own trumpet and belittle his opponents, the 61-year-old did not fail to fire a trademark barb at his opposite

Lisbon clash... Sporting (green) came out on top against city rivals Benfica

number Rui Vitoria. "If I wanted I could make Rui Vitoria this small," said JJ, putting his thumb and index finger close together, "but I won't out of respect." It would have been difficult to utter a more disrespectful comment.

But like compatriot Jose Mourinho, Jorge Jesus has earned the right, certainly in the domestic context, to get away with a gargantuan level of arrogance. "I am used to having great moments here [at the Luz]." That is an irrefutable fact. In six years as Benfica coach Jesus did not lose a single



Early strike...Teofilo Gutierrez scores Sporting's first goal

one of his 92 Liga games played in his home stadium, and his side failed to score in only one of them.

Jesus appears to have taken the magic with him to the club he represented in his playing days. The derby victory put Sporting two points clear of 2nd-placed Porto at the top of the table.

Sporting president Carvalho firmly believes his new coach is another 'special one'. "Jose Mourinho is a wonderful coach. Jorge is an amazing coach. Like Messi and Ronaldo, they are the greatest," he told BBC prior to the match.

Jesus's track record in what is known in Portugal as the eternal derby is beyond reproach. As Benfica coach, Jesus had won 10, drawn four and lost just one of 15 matches between the two sides. Since switching to the green half of the city, he has won two out of two.

"The message I passed to my players is that beating Benfica has to become a normal occurrence," said Jesus. With him at the helm, there is surely every chance of that happening.

6 of the best

Striking sensations

John Holmesdale profiles Europe's most in-form forwards

1 Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

When the extremely self-confident Borussia Dortmund striker went public in the summer with his intention to score at least 20 goals in the Bundesliga this term, the reaction of many in Germany was that he was putting too much pressure on himself. But after scoring 13 in his first 10 starts, it's beginning to look as if he was being too cautious.

No other Dortmund player has ever netted so many times at the start of a domestic season, and as proved by back-to-back hat-tricks against Augsburg in the Bundesliga and the Azerbaijanis of Qabala in the Europa League, he is not easily satisfied.

Once pigeonholed as a rather lightweight speed merchant, albeit with an eye for goal, the Gabon international has developed a more rounded and effective game since quitting Ligue 1 Saint-Etienne in 2013 for Dortmund. Under the considerable influence of Jurgen Klopp, he added strength, awareness and consistency to his repertoire, while the decision last year to switch him from a wide role to central striker has proved a masterstroke.

Although his father is the former professional Pierre Aubameyang, who played in France for Laval and Le Havre in the 1980s, he has inherited none of his dad's selfless defensive prowess. Instead, Aubameyang has turned out to be a sleek and exciting goal machine.

Prolific form... Aubameyang

Versatile... Alex Teixeira

2

Alex TEIXEIRA

SHAKHTAR DONETSK

Versatility is king for Brazilian attacker Alex Teixeira. The 25-year-old has been European football's top scorer this autumn, recording 18 goals in 12 games as Shakhtar matched their rivals Dynamo Kiev at the top of the Ukrainian league despite selling key players last summer.

Shakhtar have used Alex Teixeira in a number of different roles since signing him in 2009 after seeing him in action for Vasca da Gama in the Dubai Cup friendly tournament. In 2013, after Fernandinho had been sold to Manchester City, Shakhtar coach Mircea Lucescu deployed Alex Teixeira in a more defensive role, where he flourished. Then last season, he was moved to a more attacking role and the goals have flowed ever since.

The need for Alex Teixeira to fill Shakhtar's attacking void became all the more acute last summer, when winger Douglas Costa was sold to Bayern Munich and striker Luiz Adriano joined Milan.

Alex Teixeira won the Silver Ball as the second best player of the 2009 Under-20 World Cup (behind Dominic Adiyiah of Ghana) but he has yet to convince Brazil coach Carlos Dunga, who has been slow to call up players from the Ukrainian League. This, and the political situation in Ukraine, may accelerate a move to England, where Chelsea have been heavily linked.

3 Michy BATSHUAYI

MARSEILLE

Nine goals in his first 14 games of this season for Marseille have catapulted Belgian striker Michy Batshuayi to the top of the Ligue 1 scoring charts and led to the inevitable speculation that big-spending English clubs may swoop for him. A teenage tearaway at Anderlecht, who struggled to handle his wayward tendencies, he kick-started his career at Standard Liege. In summer 2014, he moved on to Marseille where his all-round striking qualities - tall and strong with a good touch and sharp finishing – have led to comparisons with national team-mate Romelu Lukaku.

Batshuayi was said to have been unsettled by the departure in early August of Marseille coach Marcelo Bielsa, who had given the young Belgian the chance to shine in Ligue 1. However, the summer transfers of Andre-Pierre Gignac (to Mexico) and Andre Ayew (to Swansea) opened up first-team opportunities which he has seized.

Batshuayi has won plenty of friends in Provence after using social media to track down a Marseille fan who displayed a sign during a game appealing for his signed shirt. But his long-term future may lie away from the Stade Velodrome.

Opportunities... Batshuayi

4 NOLITO

CELTA VIGO

Celta Vigo's late-blooming striker is living proof that perseverance pays off. The Andalusian made his way through local clubs Sanluqueno and Ecija in the Spanish third tier before, aged 22, joining Barcelona B, where Luis Enrique was learning the coaching ropes.

The left-sided forward thrived under Luis Enrique's tutelage before a switch to Benfica in 2011. After a bright start he spent the second half of the 2012-13 season on loan at Granada. A move to Celta in 2013 reunited him with Luis Enrique and his career caught fire. Nolito's goals helped turn Celta from relegation candidates into a highly respectable ninth-place finish and he made his senior Spain debut in November 2014, aged 28.

This season he scored a memorable goal in a 4-1 victory over former club Barcelona. Seven goals in his first nine appearances of 2015-16 has raised the possibility of another hook-up with Luis Enrique in January when Barca's transfer market ban ends.

Nolito has already rejected a possible move to England – "It's cold, it rains a lot, and the food's bad... Besides, what do I need more money for? All greed does is rip the bag" – and he is on record as expressing his admiration for Luis Enrique: "We were together for four years and I've said many times he was a key coach in my career."

On target...Nolito celebrates his goal against Barcelona

Late developer ...Nolito

5

Dirk KUYT

FEYENOORD

At the unlikely age of 35, Dirk Kuyt is enjoying an Indian summer back at Feyenoord, the club where he made his name as a bustling, hard-running striker, after leaving Turkey's Fenerbahce last summer.

Kuyt retired from international football after helping Holland to third place at the 2014 World Cup, where he was deployed in the unusual position of wing-back by Louis Van Gaal. But he has rediscovered his scoring touch at Feyenoord, recording back-to-back hat-tricks, against Heerenveen and AZ, to help Feyenoord under new coach Giovanni Van Bronckhorst challenge champions PSV for top spot in the Dutch league.

Van Bronckhorst made his former team-mate captain and had been rewarded with 10 goals by the end of October.

Kuyt has even been linked with an unlikely short-term move to Barcelona in January. Such a move might sound fanciful, but the Catalans have form in this department, having signed the veteran Henrik Larsson as a stop-gap on a one-year deal from Celtic in 2004.

Kuyt's down-to-earth demeanour and hard grafting playing style has made him a popular figure among Feyenoord fans. But even they would not begrudge him one last shot at European glory.

Final flourish ...Kuyt

6

Jamie VARDY

LEICESTER CITY

Jamie Vardy is living proof that Premier League academies and elite development schemes can count for little. Three years after playing non-league football, the Premier League's top scorer is in contention to represent England at Euro 2016.

Released by Sheffield Wednesday aged 16, he dropped into non-league while working in a local factory. His teenage years were not without problems. He was electronically tagged after a pub brawl and his club, Stocksbridge Park Steels in English football's eighth tier, often had to sub him early during away games to ensure he was home in time to meet his curfew.

England call-up...Vardy

His talent quickly saw him work his way through the divisions, from Halifax Town (sixth tier) to Fleetwood Town (fifth tier), before Leicester, igonoring the poor disciplinary record that had deterred others, paid Fleetwood £1m, a record for a non-league player.

His goals helped Leicester to promotion in 2014. His pace, ferocious work-rate and occasionally fiery attitude have troubled Premier League defences ever since.

"I watched him when he was still at Fleetwood and players who have that pace and desire to run in behind defenders are always interesting" says Roy Hodgson, who handed Vardy an England debut in June 2015.

Facetoface

IVAN RAKITIC

"You have to enjoy it because there's nothing bigger than this"

Since joining Barcelona last year, the 27-year-old Croatian midfielder has been a key performer

You won the Europa League as captain of Sevilla and were named man of the match in the Final. You joined Barcelona, leaving Sevilla the right way, with the blessing of the club and the fans, who welcomed you back with a banner saying: "Captain, this will always be your home." You won the treble with Barca, scoring the opening goal in the Champions League Final. Then came the UEFA Super Cup against your former club, which you won 5-4. Now you're expecting your second child, which you announced in the week in which you scored twice in the Champions League. And there's the Club World Cup to come. All of that in 18 months. Oh, and then there was your wedding too...to the girl you met on your first-ever night in Spain. Who writes your scripts?

Someone good! I'm not a person who waits for things to happen. I always try to seize the opportunities I get and thankfully I have someone at my side who looks after me. I live for football, I do everything humanly possible – and impossible – to achieve. I don't like to call it a job, but I do work at it. I am very, very happy and proud. I'm here to enjoy myself. If you are at Barcelona you have to. In this profession we get to do what we most like doing, and to be able to do that at the biggest club in the world is wonderful. I come into work with a smile and I go home with a smile. My philosophy is take full advantage, enjoy it, because there are a lot of players who would like to be here. It's important to get the most from your career because it can end any time – you can twist your ankle coming downstairs and you can't play any more. There's nothing lovelier than enjoying playing and winning. When you do that you want to do it again and again.

You talk about seizing every moment, about ambition and desire. But your career has also been marked by a steady progression: from Basle to Schalke, Schalke to Sevilla, and then to Barcelona. Do you think it was better that you didn't make the leap to a really big club very early in your career?

Some players will have gone straight to a huge club and it will have worked fine for them. When I was 16 I had an offer to go to Chelsea and another one from Juventus, but I didn't want to go. I thought it better to develop first at Basle. There's the excitement of going to a big club, but at the time my ambition was to play in the first team at Basle. Then came Schalke, Sevilla, Barcelona. Maybe that was what I needed; to learn from different clubs, different ideas and personalities. I've taken something from them all: errors I made, lessons I learnt.

If you could take one thing from the four clubs you have been at, what would it be?

Every club has its identity, those touches that make it special. From Barcelona, I'd take the enormity of it, the greatness, what it is. From Schalke, I'd take the organisation, the way that every detail is covered. From Sevilla, the fire, the love, the *ilusión*. And from Basle, the sincerity, the humility and honesty that they show in the way they work every day. If I could put all that together, it would be perfect.

There's a Spanish phrase that says "the train only comes through the station once" and you have to get on then. But your case shows that you don't, that the train will come through again...

I wanted to go bit by bit. I was a Basle fan and my ambition was to make it to the first team, to play, and then we'll see. I had a Swiss under-16 team-mate, Jonas Elmer, who went to Chelsea at that same time and he's now playing in the second or third division in Switzerland. If he had stayed, maybe... Every player has to trust in themselves. It's easy to say afterwards, of course. I'm not saying I did the right thing, or that he didn't, but what I did was what I felt, what I believed in. Everything happens for a reason, good or bad. You can say "yeah, I'm playing for a big club but I'm not comfortable, I'm not happy". I had to decide for myself. I spoke to my family but I didn't really want to listen to them. Your dad can say "Ivan, do this" or your brother can say "Ivan, do that". I listen, but the decision is mine. When I need advice or help I will ask for it. I had to be strong enough, free enough, to make that decision alone and in the end if it is a mistake, let it be my mistake. The decision can be good or bad, but it is mine. And I will follow it through.

It must have been hard to turn down clubs like Chelsea and Juventus at 16, though. Not least as you don't know that you'll make it as a professional and the money must have been very attractive...

I always had the idea that if I make it, the money will follow anyway. Maybe that money would have helped me then, but maybe not in the long run. When you're 16 you still don't know what the future holds but I thought, "I'm happy here, I know everyone, the club, the president". That gave me confidence. I wasn't thinking that when I'm 26 I will be playing for Barcelona, but I was thinking that I wanted to take that first step, make it the right one, and then things would follow from there. I didn't want to leap three steps forward only to slip back five. I'd rather take one step.

Sometimes it's best not to get ahead of yourself...

I remember a coach I had at under-16 level called Werner Mogg. Basle wanted me to go up an age group, to the under-18s, to play with older kids. He said: "Ivan, stay here with me. You'll be captain, you'll be the most important ➤

Success...lifting the UEFA Super Cup after Barcelona's 5-4 extra-time victory over his former club Sevilla

"When I need advice or help I will ask for it...but, in the end, if it is a mistake, let it be my mistake"

Family man...with wife Raquel and daughter Althea before a Liga game

player in the team, you'll develop and get stronger, you'll grow physically, you'll learn a lot. And then, when you do get promoted, you'll be ready for it. Don't go too early." That idea stayed with me. He was right. It was better to stay with the kids that were my age. That year I exploded. I think I scored 48 goals in 17 games.

As a midfielder?
Yes, as a central midfielder. I was captain, we won every title. I came out of it better. That was also when I really shot up. I had always been the smallest, I wasn't very quick – that's still the case! – but then I really started growing. My back and knees started to hurt. Suddenly, I was the tallest, one of the strongest.

Size matters?
At that age, a little is a lot. If you're a bit taller, a bitter stronger, a bit faster, it makes a big difference. You see some countries where kids have their growth spurts earlier and they're really strong at under-15 or under-16 level, but that doesn't carry through to senior level. There are kids with talent, but that have not yet developed physically and it's harder for them at first. We had a centre-forward who was three times as big as me, much stronger, much faster, and he was very important. But when the rest of us started to catch him up physically, he wasn't the same any more.

Is it scary to suddenly shoot up, to find your back hurts and your knees ache?
No. It excited me, it made me think, Ivan, you're growing, you're becoming a man.

You were called up to the first team soon afterwards...
Christian Gross was really important, he took me on pre-season with the first team at 16. It was like a reward; a chance to see how they work, see them close up. It was an education. It was very different, in everything. Both for good and bad. There's more character, more egotism, it's more serious. If you lose a game with the under-21s it doesn't matter. If you lose with the first team, it affects everything. There are other things too. If you're a youth-teamer and you go out to a disco, people say it's normal, he's a young kid. When you're in the first team you must be careful. If you fancy a McDonald's, you have to know how to look after yourself. If you don't, who will? The coach can't be constantly saying, "Ivan no, Ivan don't do that, Ivan do this". You need self-control. If you don't have it, it's impossible.

Did senior players see you as a threat?
You'll probably have to ask them! I understand hierarchy and I went in there with respect, but of course I knew that I was there to compete.

Early look...teenage Rakitic (centre) in action for Basle

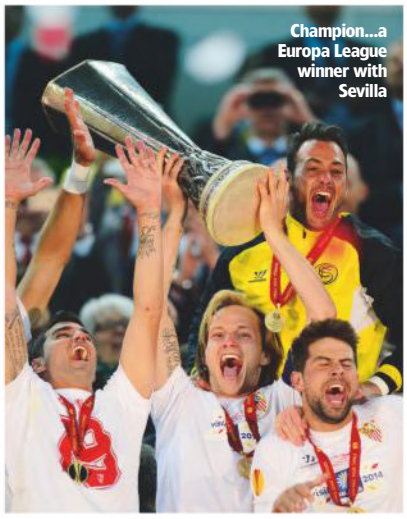
I wanted to play, we all did. It wasn't easy, but I wasn't going to throw in the towel. I trusted myself. I was lucky too. At every club I've had someone who looked after me. When I started it was Mladen Petric. He acted like a big brother, showing me things, teaching me, helping me, defending me when he needed to. He'd also tell me if I did things wrong. He looked after me. At Schalke, there was Mladen Krstajic. It's important to have someone who backs you. And because I went through that I try to be close to the younger players now, particularly in the national team. At Barcelona, it's different. When you arrive it's because you're a player who is made, consolidated.

And at Sevilla?
In the first two or three months at Sevilla I understood better all those foreigners who had arrived at Schalke. They were looking at me with a face that said, what's that idiot trying to say? And right there and then I completely changed the way I looked at those players who had been with me at Schalke. We had a Chinese player, a Japanese player, Spanish players, and when I was there I didn't realise how difficult it makes life when you can't communicate with other people, When I got to Spain and couldn't speak a word I saw that. I told myself, it doesn't matter what it takes, you're going to learn Spanish. Language is a gift. It's not just necessary so that you can play football – "go left, go right", whatever – it's more about building a group in the dressing room. If you can't talk together, it's hard. I tried everything. I watched the television, the radio, anything and everything. I had Ivica Dragutinovic translate things for me, but we spoke in Spanish as much as we could. If you

make the effort, they appreciate that. The football stuff is easy enough, but the experience is much better if you can communicate.

You had an ulterior motive to learn Spanish, too...
Yes. I met Raquel, my wife-to-be on my first day in Seville. I wanted to get to know her any way I could, so I had to learn the language. I arrived and the sporting director was waiting for me at the airport. It was 10pm and we went for dinner and then I went to the club hotel near the Pizjuan. I had the medical the next day and after that I'd meet the president. I was nervous and I couldn't sleep so I went to the hotel bar for a coffee with my brother. A coffee at midnight. That was hardly going to help! And the woman who is now my wife was serving. She brought me my coffee. There were still four days left of the transfer window, a lot of clubs calling. Another team called and were prepared to lay on a private plane for me to go and sign for them and I said to my brother: "No, I've given my word to the Sevilla president. I'm going to sign the contract tomorrow...and I'm going to marry that waitress."

Did you tell her that?
Later, I did. I was staying at the hotel for almost three months. I would go for a coffee every day. "*Un café con leche y una Fanta naranja, por favor*." I think that's all I ordered because it was all I could say. I asked her out but she would always say: "I can't, I have to work." In August, finally, she went out with me. We had dinner and we've been together ever since. Now we have a daughter and we're expecting our second child. Pure George Clooney, haha! If they do make a Hollywood film of it then he can play me. Clooney or Ben Affleck.


Champion...a Europa League winner with Sevilla

Now your Spanish is perfect, spoken with a *Sevillano* accent in fact...
In three months, I was talking to people. I think it was worth the effort. They speak differently there too. Talking to Jesus Navas or Juan Cala was impossible. I had learnt it one way and then they would be saying it another. "Why's he saying it like that?" But you end up even picking up a bit of their accent. That humour and openness they have in Seville makes it easier. If people don't want to talk to you, it is much more difficult. I enjoyed learning as people were very open. I thought, this is perfect. You know someone for one day in Seville and it is like you have known them all your life. Just for the experience it was worth it. And if on top of that the football goes well...

You even had a bar there didn't you?
Yes, but it closed down. We had it for six months, we had a few problems. It was near the Betis ground...

I see...
No, no, it was nothing serious. It was a neighbourhood with lots of young people, a lovely part of the city where there's lots of life and the usual difficulties that brings. About that time, my wife got pregnant too so we left it.

The Seville rivalry is one of the most passionate in the world...
Yes, but it's a very positive rivalry. Of course there are always people who can't bear the sight of their rivals, but it was mostly lived with that character and humour that defines people there. You can be playing Levante and it doesn't matter, people are already thinking about the derby a month before. You go to the petrol station and the bloke's a *betico* and he wants to stick diesel in instead of petrol. I have always got on well with the *beticos*, who are part of the nicest rivalry there is in the world, one that's unique. It's great to see them back in the first division. When we beat them in the Europa League – look...the hair's standing up on my arm just talking about it.

What about Germany and the Real Madrid v Barca *clasico*?
Schalke-Dortmund is big. They told me the first day: "Other games don't matter. If you score and we beat Dortmund, we'll carry you out of here on our shoulders." That was the first day. The *clasico*? I'm a football fan, not just a football player, so the chance to play in the biggest game in the world is very special. When the *clasico* is on, the lights go out and no one is on the streets. But it's different to those other rivalries: there's 600km between the two cities. They're the biggest two clubs in the world, certainly in the top five, and the level is so high. That's what sets it apart.

Has the size and reach of Barcelona surprised you?
You go to Belarus, say, and there are people outside the hotel. You set foot outside and they go mad. You have to enjoy it because there's nothing bigger than this. I got to the training ground this morning and there were kids there, excited, waiting for us., And I think back to when I was 13 and I did much the same. Recently, I saw [former Basle striker] Gaetano Giallanza here in Barcelona. He's an agent now, looking after a friend in the national team and he asked me for a shirt. And I said to him: "I was ballboy for you." That's an illustration of the journey.

But it brings pressure with it, doesn't it? Would you want your children to grow up to be footballers?
My daughter's not going to be a footballer; she'll do anything that allows her to be near to her parents, whatever it is, haha. All that can be demanding, sure, but it's part of football. To get here, you have to leave a lot by the way; if not, you won't get here. You have

Ruhr derby days...taking on Borussia Dortmund's Lars Bender

Farewell...with Xavi, who played his last game for Barcelona in the Champions League Final

to enjoy it, if that's the word. When you retire, you'll miss it. Your family is there too; there are days when things don't go the way that you want and you need them then, to lift you up.

What are you like after a defeat?
I live it a lot. I kind of retreat into myself if we lose. You could be talking to me and I'm looking at you, sure, maybe even sort of listening to you, but I don't hear you. I don't respond. When I get home, they know if they have to encourage me, or lift me. Anyway, as soon as my daughter comes up to me, that's it. "Papa, Papa..." and I think: "Oh, was there a game? Did I lose? Did I play?" But yes, I watch games back, I analyse the key moments, I go over it, I talk to my wife about it.

Javier Mascherano once said that he had to relearn how to play football when he joined Barcelona. Was that your experience too?
It's true that Barcelona have a very clear idea of how to play that has been established over many years and also that every coach puts his own touch on it. If you play the Barca system at Sevilla it's not going to be the same because the players and coach are different. The biggest difference here is that you dominate every game. You always have to take the game to the opposition, you carry the weight, you always have to win. But the way we bring the ball out from the back here, for example, is similar to the way it was done at Sevilla. What's different is the quality and the intensity. That's why it's the biggest club in the world.

Was replacing Xavi a weight on your shoulders?
Not a weight, no. I wanted to make the most of the time I had playing alongside the greatest midfielder that we have had. Working with him and learning from him was perfect and I'm grateful to him for that year not only because of what you learn on the pitch but also in the dressing room – being respectful, being humble, how to deal with the press, how to work with the physios, how to prepare for games. When you arrive you watch how things are done. And to be able to have that year with him still here was important. I don't think there will be anyone like Xavi again, but it wasn't a weight, it was an opportunity. But I also wanted to be me: I'm Ivan Rakitic and I wanted to give what I can offer too: my ability. I wanted to learn but also put my stamp on things.

You were captain at Sevilla. Are you among the leaders at Barcelona, too? Are you a voice that's heard in the dressing room?
I understand hierarchy. I know there are people here who have been at the club a long time. I understand that when you arrive you have to see, observe and understand what the club means. When it's right to talk then I have the character to give my opinion, but I accept and understand the hierarchy and understand that you have to go bit by bit. My character doesn't change. I'm a relaxed guy but also very open to helping others, especially new players. You have to wait your turn, respect that.

At the start of the season there was a vote to decide the fourth captain, which was won by Mascherano. Could you have voted for yourself?
Ha ha. I don't know. I didn't, but maybe you can. Everyone has a piece of paper and you write the name on it. Three were already decided [Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta, Sergio Busquets], but we have enough leaders that we could have gone on voting for the fifth, sixth, seventh captain. It's not necessary because we have four who are going to defend the interests of the dressing room. We have total trust in them. The club has plenty of players who have spent their whole lives here and you don't have to be a captain to be able to help and support the team.

What's it like playing behind Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez?
We have the best forward line in the world. A lot of the time people say: "Ah, how great that you have those three up front, they make things easy." But it is not always like that. They have won the right for the team to have to play for them of course but that doesn't make it easier. Everything you see them do during matches you need to multiply by I don't know how many for all the times they do the same in training: the quality they have is unique and that is why they are what they are. Leo is not just the best player around at the moment, he's the best player in history. We may never see another player of this quality. And Ney, and Luis...they're the best. Having those players conditions the way we play and influences what you have to do; you work towards them. We press high, trying to win the ball back 20metres from the opposition goal instead of 50m, so that there are just one or two players between them and the goal, not five. We play to them, which is fine – if we have to run 5,000m or 10,000m for them then we'll do it. It's worth it. If I can help them to play a little better, perfect.

And if you can win the treble and score in the Champions League Final, then so much the better. Was that the best moment of your career so far?
Well, there are lots of moments, but to score in the European Cup Final, with your family there, is very special. There are no words to express it. You feel like hugging everyone. You feel like picking up the ball and taking it away, thinking "This is for me." It's unique, you savour it but you always want more. You want to experience it again.

That success now means you have the Club World Cup in December. How seriously are you taking that? Sometimes it can feel like a drain on resources and energy as much as anything else...
I'm going to Japan with real excitement as I have never been there. It's a unique, different title. It's special to be able to play against the champions from the other confederations. So the journey is not comfortable? Maybe. But to be able to say "I'm a world champion", it's worth putting up with whatever you have to put up with.

Interview by Sid Lowe

Start...scoring Barca's first goal in the 3-1 Champions League Final victory over Juventus in Berlin

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Facetoface

CRISTIANO RONALDO

"My dream is to finish my career here in Madrid"

In October, the 30-year-old Portugal and Real Madrid striker received his fourth ESM Golden Shoe after finishing as Europe's top league goalscorer in 2014-15

After winning so many individual trophies, what does this award mean to you?
The most important job for a forward is to score goals – and to be the best goalscorer four times is an honour for me and something special. I consider it very important. And I love it because it's something you work for and at the end you reap the rewards. Let's hope I can keep up this streak.

Did you ever imagine, when you started out, that you would be a four-time Golden Shoe winner?
No, of course not. I thought maybe I could win one or two, but not four. But sometimes there is a sequence of events that push you towards an objective. In this last one, for example, I began to score a lot in the first few games and thought: "OK, I'm playing very well and I'm going to continue to do so." I didn't start saying I would win it either, but everything ends up taking over. You see people talk about the trophy and you motivate yourself.

Has the Cristiano Ronaldo at the start of his career changed a lot from the one that is here now?
He's different. I'm more of a box player, not so much a winger. Because goals are made inside the box and close to the goal, my position has changed a bit. The instinct for goal, as well, that's something you learn with experience. It's something that has come to me more naturally and that makes me happy. You can see the evolution that I've had throughout my career – since I began until today – and that is good for me. I've been evolving.

What's left for you to do at Real Madrid? Do you see yourself retiring at Real?
I want to keep winning. I still feel good, I feel young. I am 30 years old and I want to keep playing for five or six more. And in those years I want to do things well and maintain the level I've had the last few seasons. I know that it's gradually more difficult, but in my head it's possible. I want to win and I'm at the best club in the world. I have a contract until I'm 33 and, like I've said many times, my dream is to finish here at Real Madrid because I feel good and useful here. I want to keep going.

What rivals do you see for the next Golden Shoe? Do you think Lionel Messi has lost ground because of his injury?
There are many great forwards throughout many European leagues; in the English league, German...Rooney, Aguero, Lewandowski, Neymar. Benzema is also in good form. Luis Suarez again. There are many great players – but I want to keep winning it, though. We'll see what happens throughout this year.

Does it get tougher to maintain this level of sacrifice, work and fitness?
At the moment I don't feel a difference from when I was 25 years old. Many people say that after 30 you start going down, but I don't have that mentality because if you take care of yourself, work out, practise and do things right, you don't feel those sudden effects. It's like age, you don't get older from one day to another, it's something that comes slowly. And in a footballer's life it's a bit like that. If you take care of yourself, and do things right, you can keep going until 40. I have the motivation and the desire to keep going.

What does a professional do to take care of themselves even after winning everything at club level?
Everything is motivation and is just the way I am. As long as I'm motivated to play, I will take care of myself and train to the max in order to give the best I have. The passion I have guarantees that I'll have a good future. And I hope to maintain my level year after year because that it the most difficult part, maintaining yourself every year.

Are there things you can still improve on?
In everything. I don't look at just one thing, but in general. I try to be better every time...play, train, recover – which is very important – and I always want to go beyond in everything.

And what facets of the game in particular?
Headers, positioning, free-kicks...we should never think we know it all. If you have that mentality you'll never improve and you'll stagnate. I always work, thinking I can improve more and more.

Is Madrid a key part in this entire adventure? You've achieved your best numbers in the white shirt...
Since I arrived I needed to think big because Real Madrid is the biggest club in the world. It's a nice moment in my sporting life. Winning the fourth Golden Shoe is an honour and a huge privilege. I want to thank everyone who came here: the Portuguese ambassador, my coach, my president, the institution that is Real Madrid, the fans...

Have your team-mates also been essential throughout these years?
Of course. Without them I wouldn't have the opportunity of winning this. And the physios and to everyone who helps me stay fit throughout the year and always work for my good and the good of Real Madrid.

What are your objectives this season?
I'm always looking for more. I want the fifth Golden Shoe, the sixth...Real Madrid must always win titles and this year is no different. We want to win the league, the Champions League, the cup...

What are your hopes for Portugal at the Euro finals in the summer?
I'm missing a title with my national team. It would be the culmination of my career and I have hope. We have a good coach and an excellent president. The new generation is good and it has helped us grow a lot. The Portuguese clubs have bet on youth who will have their place in the national team. We have a great future.

Interview by Sid Lowe/ESM

"The most important job for a forward is to score goals – and to be the best goalscorer four times is an honour for me"

"Belgium have had to wait while they built a new team. This is what Holland must do. But we have to understand it can take two, three or four years"

Facetoface

WESLEY SNEIJDER

"There's a difference between wanting something and really, really wanting it"

The 31-year-old Dutch midfielder on his varied career and why Holland won't be in France this summer

How have you found football in different countries – in Holland with Ajax, in Spain with Real Madrid, in Italy with Internazionale and now in Turkey with Galatasaray?
In every country it's been a completely different culture, a completely different sort of competition. In Spain, the competition is more technical. When, for example, you play even Betis or Levante you know they will have technical players, quality players. Italy was more like – I don't want to say *catenaccio* – but all about strong defending and with solid strategy in defence. So I learned a different part of the job of a footballer when I was there. Now here, in Turkey, it's more about emotion, passion. They approach their football much more with the heart here. Now I can mix all these experiences together and I feel good about it. I also feel much better now physically than I did perhaps two years ago, when I was in Italy. Of course, the longer you play and the older you get the more experience you have, so you know how to give a little more and when you need to hold a little bit back.

What's your contract situation?
I've just signed to stay two more years with Galatasaray, so that
tells you I feel happy here. Also my family are happy here, so there was no reason to leave. The people here like me and I like the people. I think we can continue successfully for many more years.

Failing to qualify for Euro 2016, after finishing third at the last World Cup; what has happened to Holland?
It's hard to say what happened precisely. It's not easy to point at just one thing being to blame; I believe that it's much bigger than that. I remember, after the last game we had with the Czech Republic, how it was when I first came into the national team a long time ago. I was just one of the new guys and my father brought me to the ground, and when I stepped out of the car I remember feeling it was something amazing. I was even nervous to have arrived there because I was a young player joining a team with all these big stars. Of course, it's normal that as time goes on the quality of the old players is less in evidence and there is a new generation coming through. But if this change happens too fast, too suddenly, then it's not easy to adapt the team and the results in a good way. Ideally, you should always have a balance between the good and experienced players and the young players with talent – and at the moment in Holland there is a big gap between these two generations. We don't have enough players around 25 or 26 who can help. Also, I have to say that I have played in many tournaments and I always have tried to tell the new young players: "Listen, this is something amazing, to be in this tournament with the national football team." But there is a difference between wanting something... and really, really wanting it. I miss this feeling a little bit among some of our new players.

Does Holland have to undergo a big rebuilding process like that of your neighbours, Belgium?
Belgium are a very good example. For five or six years they were right down the rankings and couldn't qualify for Euro tournaments or World Cups. Yet now they have a very strong team because they have been building all this time with their own new generation. If you have 10 or 12 new young players then you may have a lot of talent but you don't have a team. Belgium had that, many good young players but they had to wait while they built a new team. It takes years. It doesn't happen overnight. Yet now Belgium are number one in the world. This is what Holland must do. But we must also understand that it can take two, three or four years.

Would the transition have been smoother if Louis Van Gaal had stayed as coach and not left for Manchester United?
It's hard to say that it's always good to have a change, to refresh things. It was really intense at the World Cup. People talk about Van Gaal's philosophy because you have to commit to it, you have to go with it, but it does take a lot of effort from the players. I think it was probably the right moment to change, both for us as players and for him as coach. But I don't feel it was the major reason for what went wrong.

On the subject of another of your career coaches, Jose Mourinho: knowing him from your time at Inter how do you see his recent problems at Chelsea?
Mourinho is Mourinho. He will always come back. Everybody can have a difficult period as a coach or as a player. It seems as if, at Chelsea now, they are all having this sort of period together but he will get out of it. I know it for sure. He is the best manager in Europe because a coach does not to be only good in coaching but good as an all-round manager of all the parts of a team. He always comes up with a very good strategy for action when it comes to analysing games and opponents. Also, on an individual basis, he makes players improve. Even if you are a good player then he makes you a better player. When you can only pick 11 players for the start of a game it is difficult to keep all the player satisfied but he always finds a way to support all his players and give them a good feeling about the work they are doing. In my career I've worked with a lot of good coaches but he is a complete guy. He's the one who has everything.

Interview by Keir Radnedge

Facetoface

LUKAS PODOLSKI

"Football has changed since I started 15 years ago. Everyone now can play, run and fight"

Germany's 2014 World Cup winner swapped Arsenal for Galatasaray last summer

Istanbul is very different to London. How long did it take you to adapt?
No time. I have always played in clubs in nice cities and Istanbul is certainly that. I've been here before, for holidays or to visit friends, and I have a lot of friends back in Germany who are from Turkey, so I know the mentality which has made it a little bit easier to come here. I have won the World Cup, I have a lot of caps, I've visited a lot of countries and played in great stadiums with great friends. But I haven't come here for a holiday; I'm here to train well and play well and win more titles. Our season is going well so life is good. The football is different but then that's natural. Every league has its own character. Here we play a lot against teams who defend with 11 players around the penalty box and make it difficult to score. This is not like England because in England you have the most beautiful league. Every game you see everyone is always fighting and running. The last club in the league table can beat the first. That is why it is the most beautiful league there is and why everyone likes to watch it. You have everything there; that's why for me it's the best league there is.

So why leave Arsenal?
This is a question for the manager. I think I did well. I had a good record with goals and assists, but when the manager decides that other players should play then what can you do? I was happy at Arsenal, I didn't have any personal problems with the manager or anyone there. If I had been the 25th guy in the squad and I wasn't good enough then OK, that's different. But I felt comfortable in the team and with the club and it was disappointing not to get more chances. I always played the last five or 10 minutes and this is not enough. You always want to be on the pitch at the kick-off. But when you sit on the bench and feel you could help the team, that you could score or make an assist, you are ready to play but don't get a chance... this is why I changed clubs. I had a few offers and coming here was the best decision for me. I hope I will have three or four great years here and then we'll see what comes next.

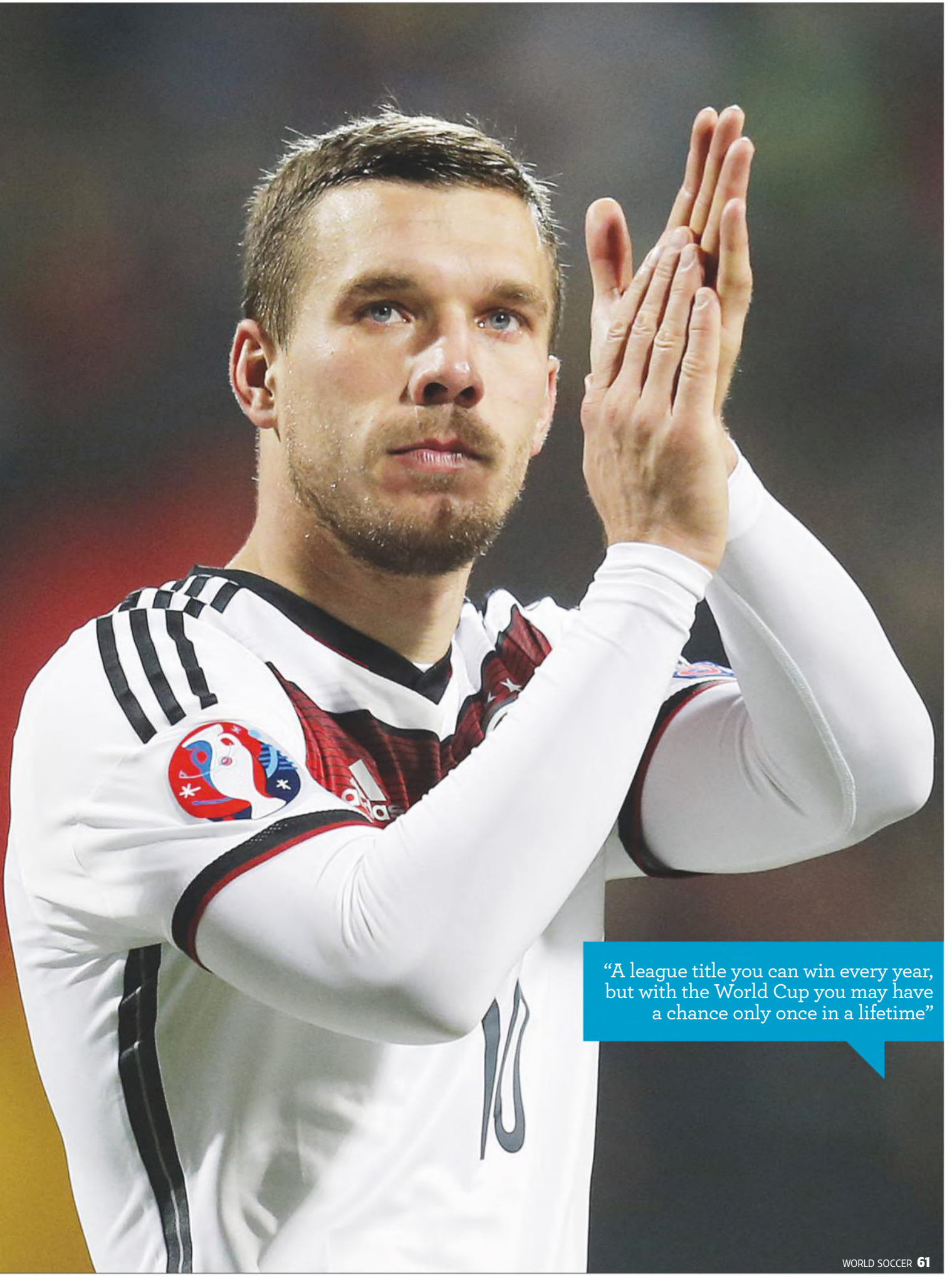
Looking ahead to Euro 2016, are you confident of Germany adding the European title to the World Cup?
We have some important, good friendly games, against France, Holland, Italy and England, and we will prepare like always. We are always strong in tournaments and we will fight for the title. Everyone else will make it difficult. We know that. When you are world champions you are a target. Everyone wants to beat you so we have to prepare for that. Also, football has changed since I started. Everyone now can play, run and fight. It's not like 15 years ago when you could play against the smaller teams and win six or seven or eight zero. Now it's not so easy any more. Like the defeat we had against Ireland. Even these smaller teams can take points from you.

What is the answer?
You have to change your own style. We have done it. We changed, step by step. Then, in 2014, we were ready. Now we are preparing for 2016 and we know we have to change our style again a bit because teams will think they know what to expect from us.

After the high of winning the World Cup in Brazil, how did you adjust to starting the next season all over again?
I don't change. If I win or lose I always try to be myself because I always have a lot of fun and passion from playing football. The World Cup is the best thing you can win. Nothing else comes close. It's the best feeling in the world because you know that only a few players, really, can win the World Cup. A league title you can win every year, but with the World Cup you may have a chance only once in a lifetime. I had been in the national team for 11 years and we were always going to the semi-finals, to third place, to second place – and finally I won. It was my last chance.

What do you remember of the historic 7-1 win over Brazil in the semi-final in Belo Horizonte?
I remember, in the first five minutes, saying to myself: "Oh, Brazil are really ready for us today." But then, after our first goal, it was finished. This was the sort of game you have once in your life. Everyone wants to talk about this game. But look at the next game against Argentina in the Final. They had three 100 per cent chances. Maybe if [Gonzalo] Higuain had scored when he had his early chance then the game would have been over. This is football. Every game is a new game. One day you beat Brazil 7-1, the next time you beat Argentina 1-0 with a goal in the last minutes. This is football. You have to be ready every time. It's why Germany win; because we are strong as both a team and with the staff we have around us. We are together. This is one big reason why we win because, as a team, we are ready – from the start.

Interview by Keir Radnedge



"A league title you can win every year, but with the World Cup you may have a chance only once in a lifetime"

World Soccer vintage 48 years ago

November 1967

European champions Celtic suffer a shock exit

Scottish club football featured prominently in the November 1967 edition of *World Soccer*, with 21-year-old Hibernian midfielder Peter Cormack, who was later to play a dominant role at Liverpool, on the cover.

Inside, Roger Macdonald reported on Celtic's surprise elimination from the European Cup – a competition they had won five months earlier by beating Internazionale in Lisbon.

"Like a Guy Fawkes rocket, straight up to a dazzling peak and then disappearing with a few sparks, Celtic have been in and out of the European Cup," wrote Macdonald.

"They were beaten, and well beaten, by Dynamo Kiev in front of their own supporters – a situation which in this competition is the same as jumping into your own coffin and waiting for someone to nail down the lid."

In truth, over the two legs of the first-round tie, Celtic were a shadow of the team that so triumphantly and elegantly beat Italian powerhouse Inter in May. They lost the first leg 2-1 at home and drew 1-1 away in Kiev. The defeat came soon after they had lost to Rangers, with their Glasgow neighbours overtaking them at the top of the Scottish league.

Macdonald continued to dissect Celtic's performance against the Soviet side, commenting: "For Celtic, it was a sad defeat. It was striking, at Parkhead, how [Tommy] Gemmell would move upfield with the ball, be absorbed by the Russians like a piece of blotting paper mopping up a pool of ink, and find two or more Kiev forwards racing down the flank he had benevolently vacated.

"Celtic's covering, by the highest European standards, was quite lamentable, and they paid the full price.

"Like Tottenham before them, Celtic are composed of a team of good players, with a few – Gemmell, [Billy] McNeill, [Jimmy] Johnstone – on the fringe of greatness, but all liable to fall back when one man's loss of form affects the balance."

Despite the win, Macdonald did not see Kiev as the future European champions. "It would be unwise to suggest that Dynamo will go on to win the European Cup simply because they have deposed the present holders," he cautioned. "Too much depends on their coach, Viktor Maslov, who arrived at Kiev in 1964 and has since won the Russian Cup twice and the Russian championship last season.

"Maslov, a taciturn, almost melancholy individual, successfully diagnosed the symptoms of Celtic's decline at one match, against Rangers – and proceeded to kill the patient with an overdose of rapid counter-attacks."

However, that was as good as it got for Kiev, who were knocked out by Gornik Zabrze of Poland in the next round. WS

Out...European Cup holders Celtic fail in Kiev

TWENTY-TWO WORLD SOCCER, November, 1967

LIKE a Guy Fawkes rocket, straight up to a dazzling peak and then disappearing with a few sparks, Celtic have been in and out of the European Cup. They were beaten, and well beaten, by Dynamo Kiev in front of their own supporters—a situation which in this competition is the same as jumping into your own coffin and waiting for someone to nail down the lid. For not since the pioneer days of 1955 has a team losing at home ultimately survived the round — AC Milan were the exception that proved the rule, beating Saarbrucken 4-1 after the Germans had won 4-3 against their reserves at San Siro. With the money and prestige now at stake, no one will ever be that naive again.

For Celtic, though, it was a sad defeat. I warned, on radio and in the national Press, that the task of overcoming Kiev would be a difficult one if only because the balance had shifted subtly since they last met. When Kiev last played in Europe they ran up easy victories against two mediocre opponents, acquired an excessive reputation as a formidable dark horse, and collapsed at the first sign of pressure. They were handicapped too, by an injury to Sabo in training which prevented him from playing at Glasgow, and by the dates of the matches. The Russian season was long over, half the country was under several inches of snow, and the home leg had to be played on an unfamiliar ground in the south. The wonder was not that Celtic won on aggregate in the Cup Winners' Cup tie, 3-0 and 1-1, but that Kiev put up any resistance at all.

This time Celtic, flushed with success, seemed to lack the dedication required by their adventurous play out of defence. It was striking, at Parkhead, how Gemmell would move upfield with the ball, be absorbed by the Russians like a piece of blotting paper mopping up a pool of ink, and find two or more Kiev forwards racing down the flank he had benevolently vacated. Celtic's covering, by the highest European standards, was quite lamentable, and they paid the full price.

Like Tottenham before them, Celtic are composed of a team of good players, with a few—Gemmell, McNeill, Johnstone—on the fringe of greatness, but all liable to fall back when one man's loss of form affects the balance. The first leg against Kiev came at the worst possible time, when McNeill and Gemmell, collectively or individually, were out of touch; when Celtic had gone down to Rangers and fallen behind them in the Scottish League. In fact their only real success so far this season had been the 2-1 defeat of current World Club Champions, Penarol, at home.

It would be unwise to suggest that Dynamo will go on to win the European Cup simply because they have deposed the present holders. Their biggest strength lies in a versatility of tactics, an ability to play defensive, aggressive or counter-attacking football without affecting their rhythm. They have, too, a huge reserve of talent. Goalkeeper Bannikov, full-back Ostrovsky, wing-half Sabo, forwards Serebrannikov and Porkujan have been absent so often on international duty that Roudakov, Kroulikovski, Medvid, Bychevetz and Mountian have become almost regular members of the first team. The intense competition for places has added a fresh intensity to their football.

Too much, however, depends on their coach, Viktor Maslov, who arrived at Kiev in 1964 and has since won the Russian Cup twice and the Russian championship last season. Maslov, a taciturn, almost melancholy individual, successfully diagnosed the symptoms of Celtic's decline at one match, against Rangers — and proceeded to kill the patient with an overdose of rapid counter-attacks. But Maslov has yet to find an antidote for the severe Russian winter, when training is a nightmare, serious matches impossible. General's January and Febuary stopped Napoleon: they may change sides for the arrival of Manchester United or Real Madrid.

KIEV NAIL CELTIC

Penarol centre-forward Alberto Spencer heads his side's only goal in the 2-1 defeat by Celtic. Home players shown are goalkeeper Ron Simpson and Bobby Murdoch. (A.)

Roger Macdonald . . . World Diary

IT is still pertinent to ask UEFA why Celtic, as holders of the European Cup, were required to play in the first round at all. True, the total number of entries, 32, was mathematically convenient for a first round of 16 ties; but equally suitable numbers have been ignored in the past, and there have been no difficulties previously in arranging a few preliminary matches. The seeding arrangements, used for the first time this year, were, to say the least of it, inept: producing Celtic v. Dynamo Kiev and Ajax v. Real Madrid on the one hand and Valur Reykjavic v. Jeunesse Esch on the other.

The creeping paralysis of the away goals rule has already infected the European Cup. A little ironically, the first victims were Jeunesse Esch, eliminated but not beaten by Valur. The first leg ended in a 1-1 draw; in the second, at Luxembourg, Langer equalised with a penalty in the last minute for the home side, but the score, 3-3, favoured the Icelanders. Two more easy draws, and we may yet have a European Cup semi-final played on the Reykjavik ice.

RUSSIA'S unexpected obsession with European club football had embarrassing results against Switzerland in a friendly match last month. No players from Moscow Torpedo and Dynamo Kiev, preparing for European ties, were considered and Yashin was not selected. The depleted team, watched by only 35,000 spectators at the Lenin Stadium, conceded a goal after three minutes, when Blutler beat Tbesikov with a superb shot from outside the penalty area. Switzerland, more typically, presented Russia with two goals—a miskick in the penalty area, gleefully seized by Khurtsilava, and an unfortunate deflection by Pfirter past his own keeper. Kunz. Ten minutes from the end, however, Perroud scored off a post to earn a 2-2 draw. So far this year Switzerland have twice drawn with Russia and beaten Rumania 7-1: even the Swiss must be amazed . . .

The public scandal involving, Voronin, the Russian national captain, has been followed by another, more infamous affair. Igor Chislenko, Moscow Dynamo's international winger, has been charged with drunken driving and causing serious injuries to a policeman while in charge of the vehicle. Even before the trial, he had been dismissed by his club so it seems unlikely that he will play international football again. Chislenko, who was sent off against West Germany in the World Cup, has always been something of an *enfant terrible* in the USSR. He was reprimanded, twice, for excessive drinking in public, and once, shortly after

> "[Losing at home] in this competition is the same as jumping into your own coffin and waiting for someone to nail down the lid"
>
> *World Soccer*'s Roger Macdonald

WORLD SOCCER, November, 1967

TWENTY-THREE

lar, the 26-year-old Yugoslavian winger, joined Hannover 96 from OFK Belgrade this season, after a qualifying period on loan to Olympic Marseille. In almost his first match, against Karlsruhe on September 9, Skoblar was sent off for violent conduct; he was fined 1,000 marks by his club and suspended by the German FA until November 10. Unfortunately the European Championship match, for which Skoblar, with 35 caps, was likely to be chosen, fell within this period. If West Germany had followed their usual practice of informing UEFA of the suspension, it would then have applied to international matches—allowing them to effectively weaken their opponents. The Germans' solution was to notify the Yugoslav FA of Skoblar's punishment, leaving the decision to them: a shrewd piece of soccer diplomacy.

Czechoslovakia, slow starters in their group, caught up with Spain with a precarious 1-0 victory in the Slavia Stadium at Prague. In spite of its importance, only 25,000 watched the game—apathy, perhaps, explained by the decline of the capital's clubs in the national championship. In a frenetic match, made or marred as you will by error and counter-error in front of goal, Czechoslovakia's superiority in midfield just proved decisive. Here, Geleta and Kuna decided the pace, and though Grosso and Marcelino played outstandingly in the Spanish attack, they were ill-served from behind. The only goal came shortly after half time when a Spaniard cleared straight to Horvath, whose shot from 20 yards all along the ground surprised Iribar. Spain's best chance came in the first-half, a free-kick by Jose Maria. The ball hit the underside of the crossbar, then Viktor, who made a frantic recovery to stop the ball crossing the line.

Roger Macdonald . . . World Diary

the European Nations' Cup Final in 1964, dropped for smuggling French negligees into Moscow. Chislenko, the son of an engineer, first made his mark as an ice-hockey right-winger. Then, in 1959, he tried football on the left flank and was chosen for the national side in his third season. Still only 28, he has been Russia's most effective winger for years, and they will find him difficult to replace.

Fancied

RUSSIA, nevertheless, seem home and dry in their group of the European championship. France, too, must be fancied to qualify, after their unexpectedly easy victory over Poland, 4-1 at Warsaw. One can only marvel at the Gallic capacity to win the matches that matter while their team totters from one defeat to another in friendlies. Only a few days after their Warsaw win France lost 5-1 to an experimental West German team, collapsing completely in the second-half. The scorers were: Siemensmeyer 2 (making his debut), Muller 2 (substituting for injured clubmate Beckenbauer) and Overath. Bosquier replied for France.

The Germans were faced with a curious moral dilemma before their own, vital European championship match against Yugoslavia, which they had to win to survive. Josip Skoblar, the 26-year-old Yugoslavian winger, joined Hannover 96 from OFK Belgrade this season, after a qualifying period on loan to Olympic Marseille. In almost his first match, against Karlsruhe on September 9, Skoblar was sent off for violent conduct; he was fined 1,000 marks by his club and suspended by the German FA until November 10. Unfortunately the European Championship match, for which Skoblar, with 35 caps, was likely to be chosen, fell within this period. If West Germany had followed their usual practice of informing UEFA of the suspension, it would then have applied to international matches—allowing them to effectively weaken their opponents. The Germans' solution was to notify the Yugoslav FA of Skoblar's punishment, leaving the decision to them: a shrewd piece of soccer diplomacy.

IF a little of the glitter of the World Club Championship final has disappeared because of Celtic's defeat in the European Cup then still more must have faded in Argentina. While Racing of Buenos Aires are South American champions, they have lost the Argentinian championship to Estudiantes, who beat them 3-0 in the final. This is the first time the championship has passed outside the big five—Racing, Boca Juniors, River Plate, Independiente and San Lorenzo. And even more curious, two of Estudiantes' players, Madero and Bilardo, are doctors in Government service.

RAMOS OLIVEIRA, better known as Mauro, captain of Brazil's 1962 World Cup-winning team, has turned up with Toluca, in Mexico. Mauro, now at least 41, was born at Pucos de Caldas, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, where he won his first cap at the age of 19. His career had a bizarre seesaw parallel with Bellini, once his team mate at the little San Jouanesce club. In 1958 Mauro lost his place and, of course, the captaincy, to Bellini, who took over at centre-half in the World Cup. In Chile, four years later, the position was reversed: this time Bellini lost both position and captaincy to Mauro. Santos paid £50,000 for his transfer in 1960, a shrewd negotiation which brought a rapid improvement in Mauro's play; although suspect in speed of recovery, his positioning and timing were always excellent.

Consistent

THE most consistent Polish forward since the days of Willimowski, Ernest Pol, is to retire at the end of the season: his Gornik colleagues made a special presentation to him before their match with Djurgarden of Sweden in the European Cup. Pol, who once told me his name had been consistently misspelt by every newspaper in Europe, has been a regular international for 16 years. In all, he has played 49 times for Poland, scoring a record 40 goals against 22 countries which, for a nation rarely in the top flight of European football, is a formidable total. Pol likes to play in midfield, behind his forwards: but long range goals have been his speciality. One remembers him best against Tottenham in the European Cup. Gornik were annihilated that night, 8-1 at White Hart Lane: but the goal of the match came from Pol, a superb volley against the line of flight which left Bill Brown staring in disbelief.

Gerd Muller of Bayern Munich and West Germany. (M.I.)

Also in this issue...

p10 In a profile of West Germany midfielder Wolfgang Overath, Keir Radnedge wrote: "The fans don't take to him because he is not what a star footballer 'should' be. He has little care for the artistry of [Franz] Beckenbauer, no interest in the embellished technique of [Heinz] Hornig and few leanings towards the 'bull-at-a-gate' outlook of [Uwe] Seeler at his most truculent."

p12 Arthur Rotmil took a swipe at the Italian press for their criticism of the discipline of players in England, commenting: "News that Leeds United's captain Billy Bremner has been booked three times and sent off once, after the first 23 days of the season, was eagerly publicised by some Italian soccer writers. But since they conveniently omitted to inform their readers that Italy too has its fair share of 'prima donnas', I would remind them that [Omar] Sivori leads the way here having 'collected' 27 days in suspensions after 267 games."

p8 Italian football also came under scrutiny for its negativity. In a review of the European leagues, it was noted that the second week of the Serie A season produced a total of just 10 goals in eight games, including three 0-0 draws.

p30-31 Philip Rising took a look at fallen English giants Blackpool, the team that in the 1950s possessed the two Stanleys, Matthews and Mortensen, but who had been relegated from the top flight at the end of a season in which their young midfield hero and World Cup winner Alan Ball had been sold to Everton. Mortensen had returned as manager, but Rising asked: "Was he the man to revive a club that had lost faith in itself and appeared to have one foot in the grave?"

10 years ago

Giovanni Dos Santos and Carlos Vela were the teenage stars of a Mexico team that beat defending champions Brazil 3-0 in the Final to win the World Under-17 Championship in Peru. Brazil defender Marcelo – who now plays for Real Madrid – was sent off.

20 years ago

Nineteen-year-old Ivan De La Pena was being hailed as the new superstar of Spanish football. Nicknamed "The Little Buddha", he had just been awarded an eight-year contract at Barcelona, after Jorge Valdano had tried to sign him for Real Madrid.

30 years ago

Argentina's 1978 World Cup-winning captain Daniel Passarella threatened to walk out on the national team unless he received the same treatment as Diego Maradona. Coach Carlos Bilardo told the defender that only Maradona was guaranteed a place in the starting line-up.

40 years ago

An Oleg Blokhin goal gave Cup-winners Cup holders Dynamo Kiev a 1-0 win against European Cup holders Bayern Munich in the second leg of the UEFA Super Cup. Blokhin had scored both goals in the first leg in Germany as Dynamo chalked up a 3-0 aggregate score.

50 years ago

Poland beat Scotland 2-1 at Hampden Park to end any hopes Jock Stein's team had of qualifying for the World Cup finals in England. Despite leading through an early Billy McNeill goal, Poland hit back with two goals in the last five minutes, from Jan Liberda and Jerzy Sadek.

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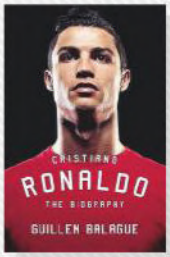

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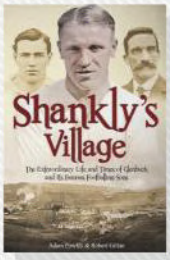

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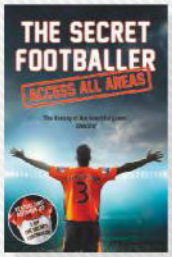

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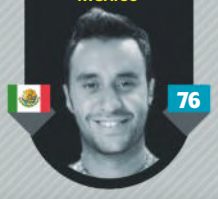

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Euro clash... Republic of Ireland (left) and Poland

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Premier...Everton (in blue) and Manchester United

AUSTRIA

Impressive improvers outshone bigger names in qualifying

OVERVIEW

One of the most impressive and improved performers in the competition so far, Austria qualified for the finals for the first time after topping their group, ahead of Russia and Sweden. Their only previous finals appearance was in 2008, when they were co-hosts with Switzerland.

After drawing with Sweden in their opening game, Austria recorded nine straight victories, including two 1-0 wins over Russia. Only England, with 10 victories, had a better qualifying campaign.

Little enthusiasm greeted the appointment of Swiss coach Marcel Koller. He was not the big name fans wanted as a replacement for Dietmar Constantini, but he has overseen a remarkable transformation in the side.

The key players are spread around Europe, with only goalkeeper Robert Almer based in Austria (Rapid Vienna). Centre-back Aleksandar Dragovic is in Ukraine (Dynamo Kiev), skipper Christian Fuchs moved to England (Leicester City) this summer and several of the side play in Germany. Veteran striker Marc Janko is back in Europe (Basle) after a spell in Australia.

Koller was consistent with his selections, with Almer, Florian Klein, Dragovic, Fuchs, Zlatko Junuzovic and Marko Arnautovic playing in all 10 qualifiers. He used only 17 players in total.

Impressive...Austria beat Russia in Moscow

TACTICS

Koller played the same formation in all 10 qualifiers. Janko is the lone striker, with free-kick specialist Junuzovic operating behind him in the centre of an attacking midfield three, alongside maverick Arnautovic and Martin Harnik.

STAR MAN

Marko ARNAUTOVIC

Dubbed the Austrian Ibrahimovic, he can be totally frustrating or absolutely brilliant.

COACH

Marcel KOLLER

Former Swiss international midfielder who has galvanised the squad since taking charge in October 2011.

PLAYER PROFILE

Driving force...David Alaba (left) has a much higher profile with his country than at his club side, Bayern Munich

DAVID ALABA

Just one of a galaxy of stars at Bayern Munich, the "Viennese Express" is often squeezed out of the limelight by such talents as Thomas Muller, Robert Lewandowski, Arjen Robben and Manuel Neuer. Yet he is rarely the forgotten man in the red and-white of Austria.

With all due respect to his team-mates, Alaba is the only world-class act in the Austrian ranks, and he certainly performed as such as they glided through qualifying, driving them forward from his deep-lying central midfield station, menacing with his set-pieces and scoring four goals.

While Bayern have used him at left-back, as a midfielder and even in central defence, Austria coach Koller sees him exclusively as the engine-room controller, where he has so much to offer with his technique, awareness, intensity when pressing and ability to break through opposition lines at pace.

"What impresses me most about him is his capacity to interpret any situation on the field," says Shakhtar Donetsk coach Mircea Lucescu. "He's disciplined, strong mentally and physically, and is outstanding when attacking space."

Euro 2016 will be Alaba's international tournament debut and his first real test as the brains in midfield.

Nick Bidwell

PORTUGAL

New generation threatening to explode in France

OVERVIEW

After a poor World Cup and opening qualifying loss to Albania, the team reached France 2016 at a canter, with a number of exciting new players introduced.

After a disappointing 2014 World Cup campaign in Brazil, Portugal slumped to a surprise home defeat in their first Euro 2016 qualifier, prompting the sacking of coach Paulo Bento.

Under new coach Fernando Santos they reeled off a record seven consecutive victories in competitive games. They also claimed the notable friendly scalps of Argentina and Italy, neither of whom they had managed to beat in the previous 40 years.

The performances may not have been as impressive as the results, but a sense of optimism is noticeably sweeping through Portuguese fans and the local press, fuelled above all by the emergence of a group of players who are drawing comparisons with the original golden generation of Luis Figo, Paulo Sousa and Rui Costa who lifted the World Youth Cup in 1989 and 1991.

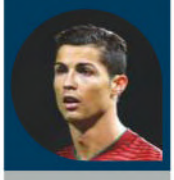
In addition to Monaco winger Bernardo Silva, Sporting Lisbon anchor-man William Carvalho has proved over a sustained period that he is the real deal. Porto's Danilo and Ruben Neves – who recently became the youngest-ever captain in the Champions League – along with Valencia's Andre Gomes and Sporting's Joao Mario, are other midfielders who are dazzling at the highest level as regulars for their club sides.

Determined...Danilo gets the better of Albania's Shkelzen Gashi during Portugal's qualification run

TACTICS

Santos has experimented with a number of different formations and players, but seems to be moving towards a 4-4-2 set-up, rather than the traditional 4-3-3.

STAR MAN



Cristiano RONALDO

Real Madrid's all-time record goalscorer is the undisputed leader and will be 31 by the time of next year's finals.

COACH

Fernando SANTOS

Replaced Paulo Bento in September 2014, having spent the previous four years as coach of Greece's national side.

PLAYER PROFILE

The future...Bernardo Silva made his name at last summer's Euro Under-21 tournament and is now a fixture in the senior side

Bernardo Silva

Portugal's hugely underwhelming World Cup showing in Brazil and disastrous home defeat by Albania in September 2014 demonstrated that an injection of new blood and fresh ideas was imperative.

New coach Fernando Santos promised that "every player eligible, at home or abroad, will have a chance of being called up". He was true to his word, calling up 51 players in little over a year and giving 15 their full debut – in stark contrast to his predecessor, Paulo Bento, who had stuck by the same names in his four-year tenure, despite form or viable alternatives.

Portugal's midfield boasts an embarrassment of riches and Monaco's precociously talented Silva, who enjoyed a fabulous debut season in Ligue 1 last term, is the figurehead of a group who promise an exciting future for the national team.

Oozing class, the 21-year-old is technically exceptional, intelligent in possession, incisive in his distribution and a potent goal threat. He was outstanding as Portugal finished runners-up at the European Under-21 Championship in the Czech Republic last summer, and by the end of Euro 2016 qualifying it surprised nobody he was starting for the senior side.

Tom Kundert

NORTHERN IRELAND

Underdogs on their way to their first Euro finals

OVERVIEW

The green-and-whites qualified for their first Euro finals, and their first tournament since the 1986 World Cup, with a squad drawn from a limited pool of players but galvanised by manager Michael O'Neill.

Northern Ireland's campaign got off to a flying start with a win in Hungary, thanks to a goal from Kyle Lafferty. Another Lafferty goal secured victory over Greece in Athens in their next trip. A 3-0 win over Greece, at a rebuilt Windsor Park in Belfast, secured qualification.

O'Neill deserves huge credit for making the most of limited resources – made worse by the change in regulations which has allowed players such as James McClean and Darron Gibson, both born in the North, to represent the Republic.

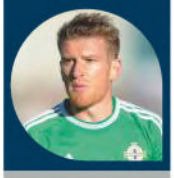
Only a handful play in the Premier League – Lafferty at Norwich City and Steven Davis at Southampton, plus Jonny Evans, Chris Brunt and Gareth McAulay at West Bromwich Albion. The rest are scattered around England's lower divisions and Scotland, including Kilmarnock striker Josh Magennis, a former goalkeeper, who scored a crucial goal against Greece.

Green machine...the Irish celebrate qualifying

TACTICS

Lafferty plays in front of a solid midfield policed by the likes of Chris Baird, Davis and Oliver Norwood, while the more attack-minded players like Jamie Ward attempt to support him.

STAR MAN



Steven DAVIS

The Southampton midfielder and national captain scored two goals in the win that secured qualification.

COACH

Michael O'NEILL

The former Northern Ireland midfielder took Shamrock Rovers into the Europa League group stage on a tiny budget.

PLAYER PROFILE

Main man...Kyle Lafferty has cleaned up his act and will be Northern Ireland's spearhead in France

KYLE LAFFERTY

From doghouse to penthouse. Kyle Lafferty was Northern Ireland's top scorer in qualifying with seven goals and is now reaping a rich reward for finally cleaning up his act.

On the receiving end of virulent criticism after seeing red for a reckless, late challenge on Joao Pereira in a World Cup 2014 qualifying loss to Portugal, the Norwich City striker seemed, at the time, to have burned his bridges with the IFA.

However, following a home-truths session with manager Michael O'Neill, he has worked to change his wild ways and has been on an irresistible roll since netting the winner in the opening qualifier in Hungary. He is more professional in his attitude, revelling in his new main-man responsibilities and providing much of the impetus for the side's qualifying triumph.

"Michael made me wake up," says the ex-Burnley, Rangers and Palermo striker. "He sat me down and talked to me like an adult. The things he said hurt but, when I went away and thought about it, I knew he was right."

There are still problems at club level. He has barely featured in the Premier League this term and may have to move on if he is not to be rusty for his date with destiny in France. His country needs him.

Nick Bidwell

SWITZERLAND

'Nati' pin hopes on youth

OVERVIEW

Vladimir Petkovic is planning for the post-Ottmar Hitzfeld era with a young, multicultural side.

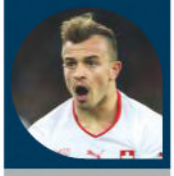
- The Swiss qualified for the Euro 2016 finals after finishing second in their group, behind England. That was despite a poor start, losing to England in their opening match, and then going down away to closest rivals Slovenia. The turning point of the campaign was a recovery from 2-0 down in the return against the Slovenians to win 3-2 thanks to late goals from substitutes Josip Drmic and Valentin Stocker.
- The Swiss will have one of the youngest squads at the Euros. Members of the 2009 world under-17 title-winning side, such as Haris Seferovic and Granit Xhaka, have made the step up to the senior side. Other key players, such as Drmic, Admir Mehmedi, Ricardo Rodriguez and Fabian Schar, are all well established in the German Bundesliga.
- Petkovic has tried to end his players' inferiority complex by declaring: "We are no longer little Switzerland."

Goal...Josip Drmic (right) scores against Slovenia

TACTICS

Petkovic likes a flexible formation allowing for a cental striker and two wide men, or two strikers with a playmaker (Xherdan Shaqiri) behind. Raiding full-backs Stephan Lichtsteiner and Rodriguez are important weapons, while teenage striker Breel Embolo is an exciting option on the bench.

STAR MAN



Xherdan SHAQIRI

The playmaker is now trying to re-boot his career at Stoke City after tough times at Bayern Munich and Internazionale.

COACH

Vladimir PETKOVIC

The multilingual former Lazio coach was the surprise appointment to replace Ottmar Hitzfeld in 2014.

PLAYER PROFILE

Starting point...Yann Sommer is an enthusiastic graduate of the Manuel Neuer "sweeper-keeper" school

YANN SOMMER

The author of a popular blog for foodies – waxing lyrical about his favourite recipes, markets and restaurants – Switzerland's goalkeeper will deserve the footballing equivalent of a Michelin star if he can help the "*Nati*" serve up tasty morsels in France.

Handed the job of national number one when Diego Benaglio went into "club only" mode after the World Cup, the 26-year-old Borussia Monchengladbach stopper has proved a most impressive successor. Though not the tallest, he is commanding and composed, snappy in his reflexes, lightning-quick off his line and skilful with the ball at his feet.

"Yann is a 100 per cent portrait of the modern-day keeper," says Switzerland's goalkeeping coach Patrick Foletti. "He has natural talent and outstanding co-ordination. I believe he could have played at the highest level in midfield, too."

Foletti is a big advocate of the Manuel Neuer sweeper-keeper school and Sommer plays with the same sense of adventure. "I like to come out from the back and play," he says. "During my early days at Basle, when I was third choice, I often used to put away the gloves and play right-back or right-wing. I learnt all about using my feet and as a goalkeeper I've profited. It's given me another perspective."

Nick Bidwell

Euro 2016 Qualifiers

GAVIN HAMILTON

First-time qualifiers join the finals party

Twenty teams book their place at France 2016

The expansion of the European Championship to a 24-team finals produced some notable qualifiers, with Albania, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Slovakia and Wales all through to their maiden Euro showpiece. The first-time qualifiers were among the 20 teams who booked their place in France next summer; the four remaining spots will be claimed by the winners of the play-offs.

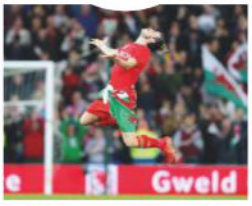
In particular, Albania, Iceland and Northern Ireland performed way above expectations, having all been drawn in the fifth pot of seeds at the beginning of the qualifying campaign.

Albania benefitted from UEFA's award of a walkover against group rivals Serbia after the match between the teams in October 2014 was abandoned amid chaotic scenes. Albania lost the return match in Serbia (see page 32), but won their final match, 3-0 in Armenia, to clinch qualification for the first time.

Northern Ireland reached their first European finals – and their first tournament finals since the 1986 World Cup – with a 3-1 victory over Greece at Windsor Park in Belfast. Concerns that Michael O'Neill's side would miss suspended top scorer Kyle Lafferty were allayed thanks to goals from captain Steven Davis (two) and Lafferty's replacement, Josh Magennis, a former goalkeeper who now plays as a striker in the Scottish Premiership with Kilmarnock.

Wales, who had put their celebrations on hold after only drawing at home to closest challengers Israel in September, lost 2-0 to Bosnia in Zenica but clinched their spot after Israel failed to beat Cyprus in Jerusalem. Wales' final home game, in which they beat Andorra 2-0, turned into a party to celebrate the country's first qualification for a major tournament since the 1958 World Cup.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFIERS



- Albania
- Austria
- Belgium
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- England
- France
- Germany
- Iceland
- Italy
- Northern Ireland
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- Wales (*above*)

Slovakia, who qualified for the 2010 World Cup, sealed their first Euro finals place with a 4-2 win in Luxembourg. Early in the campaign, the Slovakians had handed Spain their first defeat in qualifying for a major tournament in eight years.

Iceland, who had sealed qualification in the penultimate round of games in September, lost their final group game to Turkey to finish in second place behind Czech Republic. That result, thanks to Selcuk Inan's dramatic last-minute free-kick, enabled Turkey to finish the campaign as the best third-placed team and qualify automatically. That place had been expected to go to Hungary, but they lost their final game to Greece and will now face Norway in the play-offs.

Nearly all the major European powers – Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, England – came through the qualifying campaign with relative ease, although only England enjoyed a 100 per cent record.

> Only England enjoyed a 100 percent record in qualifying

The glaring exception were Holland, who failed to qualify for the European Championship for first time since 1984 (see page 82). Greece, who were European champions in 2004, also miss out after finishing bottom of Group F and losing twice to the Faroe Islands.

Less than 10,000 fans turned out to watch Greece's final game against Hungary and even a 4-3 win could not compensate for a disastrous campaign. Claudio Ranieri replaced Fernando Santos after the 2014 World Cup, but his ambitious plans to play a more attacking game with a younger team backfired spectacularly. Sergio Markarian replaced Ranieri midway through the campaign, but he failed to bring an improvement and made way for under-21 coach Kostas Tsanas while the federation searches for a big-name replacement for the 2018 World Cup qualifiers.

Austria surprised many by topping their group ahead of Russia and Sweden. Under low-key Swiss coach Marcel Koller, the Austrian team that finished fourth in their Euro 2012 qualifying group was unexpectedly revived, despite a lack of individual stars.

In the same group, Russia recovered under stand-in coach Leonid Slutsky, following the sacking of the highly paid Fabio Capello, to finish ahead of Sweden.

Croatia took second place in their group behind Italy,

Through...Oliver Norwood (left) and Steven Davis after Northern Ireland beat Greece

Clash...Albania's Migjen Basha and Andi Lila (no2) stop Adem Ljajic of Serbia

Review

and ahead of Norway, following the sacking of Niko Kovac and despite suffering a one-point deduction after a swastika was carved into the pitch ahead of their qualifier against Italy in June.

Romania, Switzerland and Poland also qualified as second-placed finishers. However, Scotland, who were strong advocates of the expansion to 24 teams, failed to qualify from a tough group, finishing behind Germany, Poland and Republic of Ireland. An injury-time equaliser by Poland's Robert Lewandowski in their penultimate match proved fatal to Scottish hopes. WS

THE PLAY-OFFS

FIRST LEGS	SECOND LEGS
Norway v Hungary Nov 12	**Hungary v Norway** Nov 15
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Rep Ireland Nov 13	**Rep Ireland v Bosnia-Herzegovina** Nov 16
Ukraine v Slovenia Nov 14	**Slovenia v Ukraine** Nov 17
Sweden v Denmark Nov 14	**Denmark v Sweden** Nov 17

SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 26, 2015

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Tuesday September 29

ALGERIA: ES Setif skipper Mourad Delhoum is banned for six matches for spitting at Al Merreikh coach Diego Garzitto in August, as his side lost 2-0 in Sudan in the CAF Champions League group stage.
BELARUS: BATE halt a run of five straight Champions League group losses with a shock 3-2 win at home to Roma.
GERMANY: A Robert Lewandowski hat-trick in Bayern Munich's 5-0 victory over Dinamo Zagreb in the Champions League takes the Polish striker's tally to 10 goals in his last three games.
GREECE: Olympiakos win on English soil for the first time, beating Arsenal 3-1 in the Champions League.
GUINEA-BISSAU: National coach Paulo Torres is banned by CAF for the remainder of the African Nations Cup qualifying campaign abusing the referee during a goalless draw with Zambia in June.
PORTUGAL: Former Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas makes a record-breaking 152nd appearance in the Champions League as Porto beat Chelsea 2-1.
UAE: Former Benfica striker Lima gives Al Ahli the advantage of an away goal in their AFC Champions League semi-final as they draw 1-1 in Saudi Arabia against Al Hilal, who miss a penalty.

Wednesday September 30

CHINA: Guangzhou Evergrande come from a goal down to beat Gamba Osaka of Japan 2-1 in their home leg of the AFC Champions League semi-final.
ITALY: Alvaro Morata equals Alessandro Del Piero's club record of scoring in five consecutive Champions League games for Juventus with the opening goal in a 2-0 win against Sevilla.
LEBANON: Al Ahed beat Tripoli 1-0 to win the Lebanese Super Cup.
SPAIN: Cristiano Ronaldo nets his 500th career goal and then equals Raul's club record of 323 goals for Real Madrid as he scores twice in a 2-0 Champions League victory over Malmo in Sweden. Atletico Madrid lose at home in the competition for the first time since 2009 as they go down 2-1 to Benfica.
USA: Jordi Quintilla scores the winning spot-kick as Sporting Kansas City beat Philadelphia Union on penalties to win the US Open Cup.

Thursday October 1

BELGIUM: There are surprise Europa League defeats for Anderlecht and Club Brugge, who lose 1-0 to Qarabag in Azerbaijan and 3-1 at home to Midtjylland respectively.
CHILE: Universidad de Chile retain the Chilean Super Cup, beating Universidad de Concepcion 2-1.
CZECH REP: Vladimir Coufal scores with the visitors' only shot on target as Liberec beat Marseille 1-0 in the Europa League.
GERMANY: Franco Di Santo scores three times in 17 minutes to record the fifth-fastest hat-trick in Europa League history as Schalke beat Asteras 4-0.
IRAN: International striker Hadi Norouzi, who is captain of Tehran-based club Persepolis, dies in his sleep of a heart attack, aged 30.
ITALY: Giuseppe Rossi scores his first goal since May 2014 as Fiorentina beat Portugal's Belenenses 4-0 in the Europa League.

Shot...Gamba Osaka's Oh Jae-suk (left) fails to close down Zheng Zhi of Guangzhou Evergrande during their Champions League semi-final

Friday October 2

BELGIUM: Surprise table-toppers Oostende extend their lead by beating Lokeren 2-0.
FRANCE: Lille beat Montpellier 2-0 for their second win of the season.
SPAIN: Celta Vigo are still unbeaten but miss the chance to go top of La Liga as they are held to a 0-0 draw at home to Getafe.

Saturday October 3

ALGERIA: Having won the away leg in Sudan 2-1, USM Alger book their place in the CAF Champions League Final with a goalless draw at home to Al Hilal.
ENGLAND: Sergio Aguero scores five goals in 20 minutes as Manchester City thrash Newcastle United 6-1, while Chelsea surprisingly lose 3-1 at home to Southampton.
FRANCE: Angers continue their fine start to the season as they climb to second with a 1-0 win against Bastia.
INDIA: Portuguese striker Helder Postiga scores twice as defending champions Atletico de Kolkata kick

Quick...Franco Di Santo gets his second against Asteras

off the Indian Super League with a 3-2 victory over Chennaiyin.
ITALY: Carpi claim their first-ever victory in the top flight with a 2-1 defeat of Torino. Chievo draw 1-1 with city rivals Verona.
SCOTLAND: Premiership leaders Aberdeen are beaten 5-1 at home by St Johnstone.
SPAIN: After six league games without a goal, Malaga finally get off the mark, beating Real Sociedad 3-1 with a hat-trick from Charles.

Sunday October 4

BELGIUM: Anderlecht miss three penalties and concede an own goal in stoppage time to draw 1-1 with Mechelen. Sven Kums celebrates his first call-up to the national squad with a hat-trick for champions Gent in their 4-1 win against Club Brugge.
DR CONGO: TP Mazembe overturn a 2-1 first-leg deficit and win 3-0 at home to Sudan's Al Merreikh to reach their first CAF Champions League Final since they won back- ➤

Win...Carpi's Ryder Matos (in white)

Argentina

TIM VICKERY

Beaten...Argentina after losing to Ecuador

Stuttering start to World Cup campaign

One point from six puts pressure on coach Martino

With just one point and no goals from their opening two qualifiers on the road to Russia 2018, Argentina's home game against Brazil in Buenos Aires on November 13 has become a must-win match – particularly as Gerardo Martino's side face a long trip north to play Colombia four days later

And with Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero facing battles to be fit in time, these are testing times for national coach Martino.

During his successful spell in charge of Paraguay, Martino proved himself to be impressively versatile.

He got off to an awkward start at the 2007 Copa America when his attempt to impose an attacking style came unstuck in a 6-0 quarter-final defeat to Mexico. It caused Martino to have a rethink, and in the build-up to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa he fashioned a side that could take the initiative when possible and hold the opposition at bay with traditional Paraguayan resilience when necessary.

However, with his native Argentina, the 52-year-old former Barcelona boss has been less flexible. And more than a year into his reign, all the talk has been of the implantation of "an idea of play" which "is not negotiable".

Despite losing their opening qualifier 2-0 in Chile, Brazil will put Martino's words to the test, especially with Neymar back from suspension, as the visitors' great strength is their ability to counter-attack – which clearly caused problems for Argentina in their 2-0 home defeat by Ecuador and the goalless draw in

> **Highlighting "the effort and the attitude of the players" are words often trotted out by a beleaguered coach**

Paraguay. These two games demonstrated that the current *Albiceleste* are a team that can be stretched and are vulnerable to fast-breaking opponents.

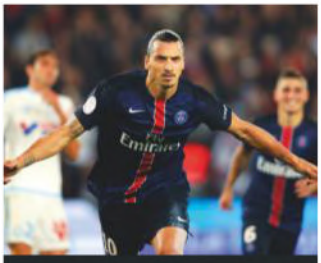
Martino is the latest Argentina coach to struggle with balancing out a side in a variation of a 4-3-3. His biggest headache is the lack of pace at the back, meaning that the defensive line drops deep and there is too much space between the sectors of the side.

The coach might feel that he has made some progress with the introduction against Paraguay of River Plate's Atletico Madrid-bound Matias Kranevitter alongside Javier Mascherano. But the addition of the 22-year-old as a second holding midfielder to provide extra cover comes at a cost. After the game in Asuncion, Martino conceded that his side had lacked fluency and that the midfield elaboration had been better against Ecuador.

He was also forced to highlight "the effort and the attitude of the players" – words that are often trotted out by a beleaguered coach in the absence of anything better to say.

With Brazil boss Dunga himself under increasing pressure to get a result, the stakes in the latest showdown between South America's big two have rarely been higher. WS

➤ to-back titles in 2009 and 2010.
ENGLAND: Arsenal beat Manchester United 3-0 to go second, while Liverpool sack Brendan Rodgers after a 1-1 draw at Everton. Dick Advocaat resigns after Sunderland's winless start to the season.
ETHIOPIA: Saint George beat Defence Force on penalties to win the Ethiopian Super Cup.
FRANCE: Two penalties from Zlatan Ibrahimovic make him Paris Saint-Germain's all-time leading scorer with 110 goals as they extended their lead at the top of Ligue 1 with a 2-1 win over Marseille. Monaco's poor start continues as they draw 1-1 at home to Rennes, while Caen rise to


Record-breaker...Zlatan Ibrahimovic

third by beating Saint-Etienne 1-0.
GERMANY: Robert Lewandowski makes it 12 goals in his last four games as Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich hammer second-place Borussia Dortmund 5-1 to go seven points clear.
HOLLAND: Gaston Pereiro scores twice as PSV win 2-0 and inflict a first league defeat of the season on Ajax.
ITALY: Fiorentina go two points clear of Internazionale – who draw 1-1 at Sampdoria – at the top of Serie A with a 3-0 win over Atalanta, while Juventus beat Bologna 3-1 and Milan are thrashed 4-0 at home by Napoli.
SOUTH AFRICA: Orlando Pirates come back from two goals down to win 4-3 at holders Al Ahly of Egypt and reach the CAF Confederation Cup Final, where they will face Etoile Sahel of Tunisia in November.
SPAIN: Villarreal stay top of La Liga despite losing for the first time with a 1-0 defeat at Levante, while Real Madrid are held to a 1-1 draw after city rivals Atletico get a late equaliser.

Monday October 5

WALES: Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale is named Welsh player of the year for a record fifth time at the Football Association of Wales awards. He also wins the players' player and fans' player of the year prizes.

Tuesday October 6

NIGERIA: Vincent Enyeama, the 33-year-old goalkeeper who is ➤

Mexico

MARTIN DEL PALACIO LANGER

El Tri earn bragging rights

Victory secures place in Russia

On October 10, Mexico experienced one of its best football nights in recent years. In a dramatic match, defined by a stunning goal in extra time, *El Tri* beat arch-rivals USA to qualify for the 2017 Confederations Cup in Russia. A few hours earlier, the nation's under-23 side had beaten Canada in the Olympic qualifying semi-finals to book their place in Rio de Janeiro, where they will now defend the title they won in London.

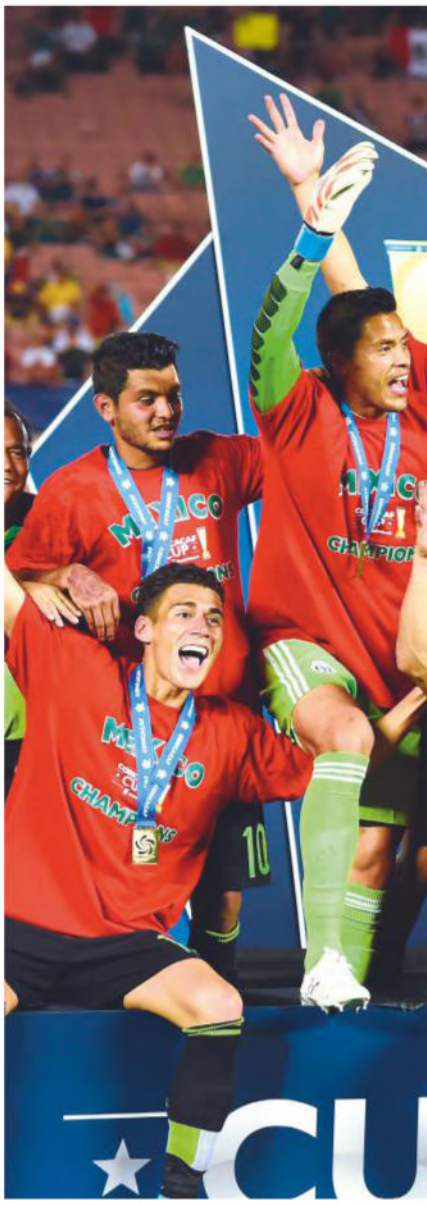
Those results were a balm for a country that is obsessed with its status in the region. Historically undisputed leaders for the past 20 years, Mexico supporters have seen their northern neighbours constantly challenge their supremacy in CONCACAF of late.

Gold Cup winners in July and supported by a contingent of seven UEFA Champions League players, Mexico were considered the clear favourites against a US side going through a complicated generational change. Despite that, the team arrived at the game in Pasadena surrounded by doubt.

Without a full-time coach after Miguel Herrera was sacked for punching a journalist following the Gold Cup victory, the Mexican FA had tried to find a quick replacement. But after being rejected by such high-profile candidates as Marcelo Bielsa, Jurgen Klopp and Jorge Sampaoli, they settled for the interim appointment of Ricardo "Tuca" Ferretti.

Born in Brazil, Ferretti has spent all his managerial career in the Mexican league. So, even though he once declared he would prefer to be a taxi driver than be in charge of the national side, the 61-year-old reluctantly accepted the position "out of gratitude to the country

Road to Russia...Paul Aguilar (left) scores Mexico's winner


Joy...Mexico celebrate beating the neighbours

that had given him everything". Despite being one of the most successful coaches on the domestic scene, his appointment sparked controversy: for its temporary condition, his defensive mindset and his well-known short fuse.

Mexico arrived at the game in the United States without a win in six matches against their hosts. Since Jurgen Klinsmann had taken charge of the US, *El Tri*'s record against them consisted of three defeats and three draws, and in the Mexican press there was a distinct fear that the power balance in the region had shifted.

Those doubts were accentuated when Ferretti announced a 4-3-3 line-up with three strikers in Javier Hernandez, Oribe Peralta and Raul Jimenez but no established defensive midfielder. In the past, the usual tactic of the United States against Mexico was to sit back, soak up the pressure and then launch counter-attacks to take advantage of the spaces left by *El Tri*. The Mexican line-up that was being sent out looked tailor-made for a new episode of the same story.

However, from the first minute, it was clear that Ferretti knew what he was doing. The high Mexican forward line and their relentless pressing frustrated

the Americans, who never felt comfortable with the ball. Mexico assumed control of the game and the host's feared counter-attacks almost never came.

Nevertheless, *El Tri* struggled to reflect their dominance on the scoreboard. Mexico went ahead in the 10th minute after a combination between the three strikers was finished off by Hernandez. Geoff Cameron then equalised four minutes later after a mistake by the Mexican defence following a free-kick from Michael Bradley.

After that, Mexico dominated without being able to score and then the game went into extra time. Peralta appeared to settle matters for the visitors in the 96th minute, but another mistake allowed the US to equalise with 12 minutes left to play.

Remaining calm and saving the best for last, there were only three minutes to go when Mexico right-back Paul Aguilar picked up a loose, high ball in the American box and won the game with a spectacular first-time volley.

The victory to decide who represented CONCACAF at the Confederations Cup was made all the sweeter by the under-23 side's 2-0 win against Canada. The juniors went on to beat Honduras in the Final, while the US will have to beat Colombia in a play-off if they are to join *El Tri* and Honduras in Rio.

But even in the best times, Mexico football is never very far from controversy. A few days after beating the United States, Ferretti finished his internship and the Mexican FA announced Colombian coach Juan Carlos Osorio as his replacement. Most of the Mexican press, who had been expecting a high-profile candidate, reacted with displeasure at the news and will almost certainly analyse every one of Osorio's decisions with a microscope.

Interesting times, as ever, would appear to lie ahead for the Mexican game. WS

Interim coach Ricardo Ferretti once declared he would prefer to be a taxi driver than be in charge of Mexico's national side

➤ his country's most capped player, quits international football after he is replaced as national captain.

Wednesday October 7

CROATIA: Dinamo Zagreb reveal midfielder Arijan Ademi failed a drug test after their Champions League victory over Arsenal in September.
SOUTH SUDAN: Torrential rain in Juba sees South Sudan's first-ever World Cup qualifier, at home to Mauritania, abandoned after 10 minutes with the score at 1-1.

Thursday October 8

AUSTRALIA: Brisbane Roar open the new A-League season with a 3-1 win at Western Sydney Wanderers.
CHILE: The Copa America holders begin their World Cup qualification campaign with a 2-0 win against Brazil with goals from Eduardo Vargas and Alexis Sanchez. It is their first victory over the five-time world champions in 15 years.
ECUADOR: Goals from Frickson Erazo and Felipe Caicedo give Ecuador a shock 2-0 win away to Argentina in the World Cup qualifiers.
ENGLAND: Former Borussia Dortmund boss Jurgen Klopp is appointed manager of Liverpool.
FIFA: The Ethics Committee hands 90-day suspensions to Sepp Blatter, Michel Platini and Jerome Valcke, while Chung Mong-joon is banned for six years.
JORDAN: A 2-0 win over Asian champions Australia sees Jordan leapfrog their visitors at the top of their World Cup qualifying group.
NORTHERN IRELAND: A 3-1 win at home to Greece secures a first-ever qualification for the European Championship and a first major finals for 30 years.

Clash...Jordan (in white) take on Australia

PORTUGAL: Joao Moutinho scores the only goal of the game in a 1-0 victory over Denmark that seals a place in next summer's Euro finals.

Friday October 9

REP OF IRELAND: Dundalk retain the title with a 1-1 draw at Shamrock Rovers as second-place Cork City draw 1-1 with Drogheda United.
SPAIN: The European champions ➤

➤ will get the chance to defend their crown in France next summer after beating Luxembourg 4-0.
SWITZERLAND: Seven different players score as Switzerland beat San Marino 7-0 to qualify for Euro 2016.
SWAZILAND: A 6-0 win in Djibouti equals the record away victory for a World Cup qualifying game in Africa.

Saturday October 10

BELGIUM: A 4-1 win over Andorra seals Belgium's place at Euro 2016.
HOLLAND: Robin Van Persie comes on as a sub to win his 100th cap as Holland win 2-1 in Kazakhstan.
ITALY: Goals from Eder, Stephan El Shaarawy and Matteo Darmian give Italy a 3-1 win against Azerbaijan and a place in the Euro finals.
MEXICO: An extra-time goal from Paul Aguilar gives Mexico a 3-2 victory over USA and a place in the 2017 Confederations Cup.
WALES: Despite losing 2-0 away to Bosnia, Wales qualify for their first major finals since 1958 due to Israel's 2-0 Euro defeat by Cyprus.

Sunday October 11

ALBANIA: A 3-0 Euro qualifying win in Armenia equals Albania's best-ever competitive victory and secures a place in the finals of a major tournament for the first time.
MEXICO: The reigning Olympic champions will defend their title in Rio after winning the CONCACAF qualifying tournament, beating Honduras 2-0 in the Final. Both finalists go through to the finals, while USA play off against Colombia.
POLAND: First-half goals from Grzegorz Krychowiak and Robert Lewandowski give Poland a 2-1 win against Republic of Ireland in Warsaw and secure Euro 2016 qualification.

Final...Mexico beat Honduras (in white)

Monday October 12

AFRICA: Yaya Toure, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Mohammed Salah

USA

PAUL GARDNER

Klinsmann under fire

'Black Saturday' adds to calls for coach's head

Since defeat by Mexico in the 2017 Confederations Cup play-off and an Olympic qualifying loss to Honduras – which came within hours of each other on Saturday, October 10 – the criticism of Jurgen Klinsmann has been growing, putting both his jobs at stake. National coach since July 2011, the 51-year-old German was given a four-year contract extension by US Soccer Federation president Sunil Gulati in December 2013 that upped his salary to an estimated $4million a year. He was also handed the additional responsibility of technical director.

Part of Gulati's reasoning was that Klinsmann was much sought after by other countries, so it was essential to secure him to a long-term contract. But there were those who felt results over the previous two years did not warrant such a move.

Setting out to prove the doubters wrong at the following summer's World Cup, the USA made it out of what Klinsmann called a "group of death – the worst of the worst". But while he claimed reaching the knockout stage was a triumph, Klinsmann's team did nothing new. The USA made it to the second round in 2010, under Bob Bradley, when they won their group, and in 2002 Bruce Arena took the team to the quarter-finals.

Nor was there anything remarkable in the USA's play in Brazil. They never looked comfortable on the ball, failed to develop any rhythm or showed little hint of a style of play.

Despite the national side's recent poor results – the most recent of which was a 1-0 loss at home to Costa Rica on October 13 – nothing has been heard from Gulati beyond a statement that he would be meeting with Klinsmann, as he always did after games, to discuss how things were going. But things have not got any better and, on October 24, the USA failed to qualify from the group stage of the Under-17 World Cup in Chile.

Klinsmann is also under attack for his obsession with foreign coaches – his staff containing the German duo of Berti Vogts and Matthias Hamann, with Austria's Andi Herzog running the Olympic team. While many feel the Olympic team should be coached by an American, Klinsmann has made it clear that he does not hold a high opinion of American soccer – and that means both its coaches and its players. So far he has tracked down and recruited over half-a-dozen players, mostly from Germany, who are American passport holders and therefore qualified to play for the national side.

He has sounded off more than once about the training young American players undergo – a direct criticism of Major League Soccer. Indeed, in 2014, his constant sniping moved MLS commissioner Don Garber to publicly and harshly rebuke him, describing Klinsmann's comments as "very, very detrimental to the league...to everything we're trying to do".

Nor are Klinsmann's dealings with his players exactly

Agony...Matt Miazga is surrounded by celebrating Hondurans after the USA's Olympic qualifying defeat

are nominated for the 2015 CAF African Footballer of the Year.
ENGLAND: A 3-0 victory away to Lithuania gives Roy Hodgson's team the only 100 per cent record in qualification for the Euro finals.
RUSSIA: A 2-0 win over Montenegro in Moscow sees Russia qualify for Euro 2016 and means Leonid Slutsky has won all four games since taking over from Fabio Capello.
SLOVAKIA: A 4-2 win away to Luxembourg secures Slovakia second place in Group C and automatic qualification for Euro 2016.
SPAIN: Cesc Fabregas misses a penalty on his 100th appearance for Spain as they beat Ukraine 1-0 in Kiev thanks to a goal from debutant Mario Gaspar.

Tuesday October 13

ARGENTINA: A goalless draw with Paraguay means Argentina are without a win after their first two World Cup qualifiers for the first time in 46 years.
BRAZIL: Willian scores twice as Brazil get their first World Cup qualifying win, beating Venezuela 3-1 in Fortaleza.
CHAD: Having twice been denied on away goals, Chad advance to the next stage of World Cup qualifying for the first time when a 2-1 loss in Sierra Leone sees them draw 2-2 on aggregate and advance on away goals themselves.
CHILE: Two goals each from Alexis Sanchez and Eduardo Vargas help Chile to a 4-3 win away to Peru, who have Christian Cueva sent off.
COMOROS: Although they have never won a World Cup qualifier, Comoros go through to the next stage on away goals after a 1-1 draw in Lesotho.
CROATIA: Two points adrift at kick-off, Croatia's 1-0 win in Malta, coupled with Norway's 2-1 loss away to Italy, sees Croatia claim a place in France next summer.
ECUADOR: A 2-0 win at home to Bolivia maintains Ecuador's 100 per cent start to their World Cup qualifying campaign.
ENGLAND: Former West Ham United boss Sam Allardyce is appointed Sunderland manager, returning to the club where he played between 1980 and 1981.
HOLLAND: Dutch striker Robin Van Persie scores an own goal and then makes amends at the right end, but he cannot prevent Holland's hopes of qualifying for the Euros ending with a 3-2 loss at home to Czech Republic.
SYRIA: A hat-trick from Oasama ➤

Heated...Olympic coach Andi Herzog rages at the fourth official during the Honduras defeat

Foreign legion... Jurgen Klinsmann (right) is accused of being obsessed with foreign coaches, such as compatriot Berti Vogts (left)

private. He has openly criticised Clint Dempsey and Michael Bradley for leaving Europe and then returning to MLS. And after the recent Mexico game, he sent Fabian Johnson (one of his German-Americans) back to Germany and told the world that it was because he had asked to be substituted.

The worst example of Klinsmann's apparent need to put the blame on his players came when he dropped Landon Donovan from the 2014 World Cup squad. In purely football terms, the move looked to be ridiculous and came over as being done simply out of spite. As Arena put it: "If there are 23 players better than Landon, then we have a chance to win the World Cup."

Perhaps the most serious of Klinsmann's faults is his obvious reluctance to select Hispanic players. The squad that he took to the 2014 World Cup included just two while there were seven "passport" Americans.

The next big test for Klinsmann – it being a pretty safe assumption that Gulati will not remove him – will be the CONCACAF World Cup qualifiers which start in November. Except that it is not really a test at all. CONCACAF has three guaranteed World Cup berths and it is absurd to imagine that the US will not stroll through the qualifiers to take one of those.

If results matter, if player selection and team tactics matter, if erecting a structure that includes the huge – and growing – number of Hispanic players matters, then Klinsmann should be out of a job, for he scores poorly in all those areas.

What he is good at is PR. His constant smile, his friendliness and his willingness to talk with supporters make him a popular figure among many. After the Mexico debacle he even managed to make his defiant - or was it embattled? - "I'm not here to be liked" come over as something likeable.

It does not surprise that some of the most pointed criticism of Klinsmann has come from Donovan, who said before the loss to Mexico: "Around the world, if a player plays poorly they get dropped from the team. We had a very poor summer with bad results in the Gold Cup.

"The reality is that, anywhere else in the world, if a coach had those results, and they lose this game against Mexico, they'd be fired. I think Jurgen has to be held to that standard too." WS

Germany

NICK BIDWELL

New boys hit their stride

Ingolstadt and Darmstadt ruffle feathers

At a time when Bayern Munich completely dominate the German scene, Bundesliga watchers have to look elsewhere for their fix of unpredictability. And where better to score than surprise-packet new boys Ingolstadt and Darmstadt.

Widely tipped to spend the season breaking their backs on a relegation chain gang, the unfashionable pair have instead been running free, self-confident and defiant, picking up scalps and points almost on a weekly basis and burrowing their way into the top 10.

Neither team are sultans of style, relying on heart, discipline, uncompromising defence, swift counters and meticulously rehearsed set-pieces. But the formula is working, especially on the road.

Using a *catenaccio* format which would not have looked out of place in 1960s Italy, Ingolstadt eked out 1-0 wins in their first three away games at Mainz, Augsburg and Werder Bremen. Equally impressively, Darmstadt have won at European participants Bayer Leverkusen and Augsburg, as well as drawing at Ruhr giants Schalke and Borussia Dortmund.

Darmstadt, a city south of Frankfurt, are hosting top-flight football for the first time in 33 years, while Bundesliga virgins FC Ingolstadt have only been in existence since 2004, founded by the fusion of MTV Ingolstadt and ESV Ingolstadt.

That both clubs have come from nowhere to live the dream must, for the most part, be attributed to outstanding coaches Ralph Hasenhuttl at Ingolstadt and Darmstadt's Dirk Schuster. With vision, ambition, eye for detail and psychological astuteness, each has that rare ability to build teams worth much more than the sum of its parts – journeymen plus cast-offs all woven into a coat of many colours.

The term "miracle worker" is thoroughly apt. Hasenhuttl, a former Austria striker and coach at lower-league German clubs Unterhaching and Aalen, needed just 18 months to transform Ingolstadt from second-tier relegation candidates to champions. One minute a rabble, the next, a finely tuned and compact high-pressing machine.

"We have the power, the dynamism and the understanding," declared Hasenhuttl. "It won't be enough against every opponent in the Bundesliga, but it must be possible for us to beat mid-table sides. The Bundesliga needs underdogs."

Once a terrier-like defender with the old DDR national team and Karlsruhe, Schuster has arguably achieved even more of a fairy tale with Darmstadt, taking on a moribund third-tier club and guiding them to promotion in each of the past two seasons. Like his gregarious old Karlsruhe boss Winni Schafer, Schuster is a dab hand at firing up his personnel and as an English-style manager – both coach and director of sport – really does own the masterplan.

At both clubs stars are emerging. Ingolstadt midfielder Pascal Gross is one of the best dead-ball specialists around, centre-back and skipper Marvin Matip and Austrian keeper Ramazan Ozcan have been exceptional. Darmstadt stand-outs are keeper Christian Mathenia, midfielder Konstantin Rausch and especially goal-hungry Marcel Heller. Clocked at 3.7 seconds over 30 metres, the striker has really been exploiting that velocity of late.

Don't promoted teams have to splash the cash to have any chance of survival? Ingolstadt and Darmstadt beg to differ, the former spending only €3.7million on new signings last summer and the latter investing less than a million, preferring to bring in a slew of free transfers and loans, among them Hertha Berlin striker Sandro Wagner, Mainz's Costa Rican defender Junior Diaz, Eintracht Frankfurt attacker Jan Rosenthal and Werder Bremen's Italian centre-back Luca Caldirola.

Whereas Hasenhuttl has mostly kept faith with the personnel who won promotion, Schuster has built team 2.0, grabbing as many out-of-favour Bundesliga players as he could and giving them a new lease of life.

The dividing line between the two overachievers is, quite simply, money. Darmstadt lead a hand-to-mouth

Wall game... Darmstadt defend a free-kick from Bayer Leverkusen's Hakan Calhanoglu

> "We've developed our own special football culture"
> Darmstadt president Rudiger Fritsch

Fairy tale...Ralph Hasenhuttl turned Ingolstadt from relegation candidates to second-division champions in 18 months

existence, while Ingolstadt are financed by locally based car-manufacturers Audi, thanks to whom they have a small yet perfectly formed new stadium (the 15,800 Audi Sportpark), great training facilities, excellent sponsorship possibilities and a yearly stipend thought to be around €10-12m.

Company clubs such as Bayer Leverkusen, Wolfsburg and RB Leipzig tend to be unpopular with opposition fans, who accuse them of having no tradition and an in-built monetary advantage. Ingolstadt are also tarred with that brush, much to chairman Peter Jackwerth's annoyance. "I refuse to discuss this works-club claptrap," he says. "Eighty per cent of the shares here belong to the club. On this basis, Bayern Munich would be a works club too."

In contrast, Darmstadt's dilapidated Bollenfaltor stadium has grass growing on the terraces, spartan changing rooms and a press stand temporarily erected for every home game. A home from home for rustic, old-school charm and flashbacks to how the German game used to be.

"We've developed our own special football culture," Darmstadt president Rudiger Fritsch told *Kicker* magazine. "We have no intention of creating an artificial image. We've had sponsorship enquiries from companies who share our values."

So, which new kids on the Bundesliga block to root for? Rough-and-ready Darmstadt or the better off but just as competitive Ingolstadt? WS

➤ Omari gives Syria a 5-2 victory over Afghanistan in the World Cup qualifiers to move above Japan at the top of Group E.

TURKEY: Selcuk Inan's 89th-minute free-kick against Iceland sees Turkey qualify automatically for the Euro finals as the best third-place team.

Wednesday October 14

ENGLAND: Jose Mourinho is fined £50,000 and given a suspended one-match stadium ban following comments he made about officials after Chelsea's home defeat by Southampton on October 3.

ISRAEL: National coach Eli Guttman resigns after his failure to lead his side to Euro 2016 following a 3-1 defeat by Belgium.

MEXICO: Juan Carlos Osorio takes over from interim boss Ricardo Ferretti as national coach.

USA: Toronto secure their place in the MLS play-offs for the first time with a 2-1 win at home to New York Red Bulls. Herculez Gomez and Sebastian Giovinco score the goals.

Debut...Toronto (in red) make the MLS play-offs for the first time

Thursday October 15

USA: New York Cosmos' 38-year-old former Spain striker Raul announces he will retire next month.

Friday October 16

BELARUS: After two years out injured, Dmitri Mozolevski scores on his return as BATE beat Vitebsk 2-0 to seal their 10th consecutive title with three matches to spare.

CROATIA: Dinamo Zagreb beat NK Zagreb 4-1 to stretch their unbeaten league run to 50 games, taking in a period of 17 months.

GERMANY: Former Mainz coach Thomas Tuchel enjoys a winning return to his old club as Borussia Dortmund triumph 2-0.

SCOTLAND: Despite failing to qualify for the finals of Euro 2016, national coach Gordon Strachan signs a two-year contract extension.

Saturday October 17

CHILE: As the Under-17 World Cup gets under way, hosts Chile are held to a 1-1 draw by Croatia.

ENGLAND: Wayne Rooney scores his first away league goal for 11 months as Manchester United win 3-0 at Everton. Raheem Sterling gets a first hat-trick as leaders Manchester City thrash Bournemouth 5-1.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich become the first side to win their opening nine games of a Bundesliga season as they beat Werder Bremen 1-0.

ITALY: Daniele De Rossi marks his 500th game for Roma with a goal in the 3-1 win against Empoli. Only Francesco Totti has previously reached this milestone for the club. Torino coach Giampiero Ventura oversees his 1,000th game with a 1-1 draw at home to Milan.

SPAIN: Neymar scores four as Barcelona come from behind to beat Rayo Vallecano 5-2. Cristiano Ronaldo gets his 324th goal, in a 3-0 win against Levante, to become Real Madrid's all-time leading scorer.

Sunday October 18

ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors have Daniel Diaz and Cristian Erbes sent off as they lose 3-1 at Racing and miss the chance to clinch the league title with two games to spare.

ENGLAND: Georginio Wijnaldum scores four times as Newcastle United beat Norwich City 6-2 to record their first league win of the season and move off the foot of the table.

EURO 2016: The draw for the two-legged play-offs produces Sweden v Denmark, Ukraine v Slovenia, Bosnia v Republic of Ireland and Norway v Hungary.

FRANCE: Marseille continue to languish in 16th place with a 1-1 draw at home to Lorient.

GREECE: Dimitar Berbatov misses a penalty as PAOK succumb to a stoppage-time equaliser to draw 3-3 with Iraklis in the Thessaloniki derby.

ITALY: Despite losing 2-1 at Napoli, Fiorentina stay top of Serie A as Internazionale can only draw 0-0 at home to Juventus.

RUSSIA: Lokomotiv beat Moscow rivals Spartak 2-1 to close the gap on league leaders CSKA to five points.

USA: Mike Grella scores the fastest-ever MLS goal, finding the net within seven seconds as New York Red Bulls beat Philadelphia Union 4-1.

Monday October 19

ENGLAND: Swansea City lose at home for the first time this season, going down 1-0 to Stoke City.

KUWAIT: Following FIFA's decision to suspend the country's football association, Kuwait steps down as ➤

➤ host of December's Gulf Cup of Nations tournament.
SPAIN: Bottom-of-the-league Granada surrender a 3-1 lead at Sporting Gijon, who draw 3-3 thanks to a Miguel Angel Guerrero equaliser in injury time. Fellow strugglers Las Palmas replace coach Paco Herrera with Quique Setien.

Tuesday October 20

ARGENTINA: Ramon Abila gives Huracan a 1-0 lead to take to Uruguay for the second leg of their Sudamericana Cup semi-final against Defensor Sporting.
GERMANY: Bayer Leverkusen and Roma share eight goals to equal the highest-scoring draw in Champions League history. After 12 successive wins, Bayern Munich go down 2-0 at Arsenal. They also fail to score for the first time this season.
MEXICO: Five second-half goals see Santos Laguna thrash Costa Rica's Deportivo Saprissa 6-1 to secure a spot in the quarter-finals of the CONCACAF Champions League.
PORTUGAL: At 18 years and 221 days, Ruben Neves becomes the youngest-ever captain in the Champions League as he leads Porto to a 2-0 victory over Maccabi Tel Aviv, in which Iker Casillas keeps a competition-record 51st clean sheet.
UAE: Kwon Kyung-won's goal four minutes into injury time earns Al Ahli a first-ever place in the AFC Champions League Final as they win 3-2 on the night to beat Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal 4-3 on aggregate.

Finalists...Kwon Kyung-won (centre) celebrates his injury-time winner for Al Ahli

Wednesday October 21

ARGENTINA: Defending champions River Plate beat Brazil's Chapecoense 3-1 in the home leg of their Sudamericana Cup quarter-final.
CHINA: Guangzhou Evergrande manage a goalless draw in Japan to beat Gamba Osaka 2-1 on aggregate and reach the Final of the AFC Champions League.
ITALY: During a 0-0 draw with Borussia Monchengladbach in the Champions League, Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon surpasses Alessandro Del Piero's record of having played 48,867 minutes for the club.
SPAIN: Real Madrid fail to score in a Champions League group game for the first time since 2008 as they are held to a goalless draw by Paris Saint-Germain in France.
UKRAINE: Mircea Lucescu becomes only the fifth coach in the 23-year history of the Champions League to take charge of 100 games as his Shakhtar Donetsk side lose 1-0 to Malmo in Sweden.

Thursday October 22

EUROPA LEAGUE: Braga, Napoli and Rapid Vienna – who beat Marseille, Midtjylland and Viktoria Plzen respectively – are the only teams left in the competition with 100 per cent records.

Friday October 23

FRANCE: Lyon bounce back from their midweek Champions League defeat to beat Toulouse 3-0.

Saturday October 24

ENGLAND: Arsenal go top of the Premier League by beating Everton 2-1, while Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho is sent to the stands as his side lose 2-1 at West Ham United.
FRANCE: GFC Ajaccio win in the top flight for the first-ever time as they stun Nice 3-1. Goal-line technology is used to award a goal in Ligue 1 for the first time as Kamil Grosicki scores for Rennes in a 1-1 draw with Lorient.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich become the first club to win 1,000 Bundesliga games with a 4-0 victory at home to Cologne. Bayer Leverkusen twice ➤

Holland

KLAAS-JAN DROPPERT

Dismal Dutch entering the Dark Ages

Euro exit highlights a raft of problems that have gone ignored

There is something about a European Championship held in France that gives Holland a terrible fright. Thirty years ago the *Oranje's* entrance was blocked by Spain thrashing Malta 12-1; this time around the 2014 World Cup bronze medallists suffered the biggest Euro qualifying humiliation since November 1963, when they were eliminated after a 2-1 defeat by Luxembourg.

For many abroad it was a shock. However, at home most people had seen it coming.

Nearly everything went wrong – from Daryl Janmaat's last-minute mistimed backheader against Czech Republic in September last year, which handed David Limbersky the perfect opportunity to score the winning goal, to Robin Van Persie heading into his own goal in Holland's 3-2 home defeat by the same opponents 13 months later.

Injuries to key players like Arjen Robben, foolish red cards, disastrous defending and too many defeats: it was a catalogue of disasters. Frankly, a team that took only one point against their main rivals Iceland, Czech Republic and Turkey simply didn't deserve to be in France.

Fallen idol... Memphis Depay's attitude has been brought into question

Since Danny Blind took over in June, after the Dutch FA had shown Guus Hiddink the door, things deteriorated. Under former Ajax captain Blind, Holland lost three of their four remaining matches. All had been crucial if they were to have any hope of reaching France, either automatically in second place or via the play-offs.

Elimination is just another sign that Dutch football has lost its dominance. There have been

Future bleak...Robin Van Persie collected his 101st cap in the defeat by Czech Republic but has rarely been fully fit

warnings for some time. For eight years, not one Dutch club has reached the knockout phase of the Champions League. Holland will lose its automatic qualifying berth in 2017 and even a second (preliminary) spot in 2020 if its clubs continue like this. The level of the domestic Eredivisie is declining every year with no sign of change.

The Dutch FA organised a summit on the future of the country's game last December, attended by prominent people from across Dutch football, including Johan Cruyff. A masterplan is not expected until May 2016, but FA director Bert Van Oostveen has already revealed: "Mentality will be an important factor."

That is an indirect challenge to the way Memphis Depay has behaved of late. A symbol of recent times, he was praised at the World Cup but heavily criticised during the Euro qualifiers – for his over-the-top fashion statements and refusal to talk to the media despite the FA code obliging him to do so. And if Depay didn't like a question, he would answer: "Next question".

His attitude would not be a talking point if he had done his talking on the pitch, but the Manchester United striker did not. Eight matches, no goals, not even an assist, in the qualifying campaign says it all.

Apart from mentality there are other important questions to tackle. Why did Holland stubbornly stick to a static 4-3-3 system? Even Louis Van Gaal showed at the World Cup that there are other ways. Why has no decent defender emerged since Jaap Stam?

"That eternal focus on ball possession seems to be the ultimate goal in Dutch football," said the Dutch FA's technical director Jelle Goes, showing that Holland has been caught up in its own dogmas for too long.

> "I don't feel damaged myself. We must analyse where we went wrong and look ahead"
> Holland coach Danny Blind

Stumbling on...Danny Blind

With so many deep-lying problems to solve, sacking Blind would be of no use. So the coach, who was originally scheduled to take over from Hiddink after Euro 2016, will stay – backed by Van Oostveen, who has no choice since two sackings within a matter of months would make his own position untenable.

There is no suitable successor. Van Gaal is finishing his career at Manchester United, while Ronald Koeman, bluntly dismissed as a top candidate by Van Oostveen in favour of Hiddink, and Frank De Boer won't step in now.

Blind has his work cut out to stabilise a young team (it had the youngest defence of all teams in the qualifiers with an average age of 23.9 years) and find a more realistic way of playing. He also needs to show his qualities as a leader – though many doubt he can – and steer the team in the right direction. The immediate future, though, is bleak.

Blind must hope veterans like Wesley Sneijder and Robben remain fit and are willing to go one final round. As for Van Persie, who collected his 101st cap against the Czechs but has been hardly fit for over a year, there are serious doubts about his future.

It is more likely Holland have entered a footballing Dark Ages and it will take years to come even close to third place at a World Cup. Now, even qualifying for a tournament is an insurmountable hurdle. WS

➤ come from two goals down to beat Stuttgart 4-3.
ITALY: Internazionale miss the chance to go top as they are held 1-1 at Palermo. Bologna move off the bottom of Serie A as they come from behind to beat Carpi 2-1.
SPAIN: Real Madrid inflict Celta Vigo's first defeat of the season to move three points clear at the top of La Liga with a 3-1 win. Kevin Gameiro scores a hat-trick as Sevilla beat Getafe 5-0.

Sunday October 25

ENGLAND: Manchester City return to the top of the table after a 0-0 draw with Manchester United. Sunderland record their first league win of the season and move off the foot of the table with a 3-0 victory over Newcastle United. Aston Villa, who sacked manager Tim Sherwood earlier in the day, go bottom.
ESTONIA: A 1-0 victory over Infonet, coupled with Levadia drawing 0-0 at

Stalemate...the Manchester derby

lowly Parnu Linnameeskond, means Flora Tallinn claim their 10th Estonian league title.
FINLAND: In just their second season in the top flight, SJK from Seinajoki are crowned champions with a 2-0 victory over bottom club FF Jaro.
FRANCE: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores his seventh goal in his last four games against Saint-Etienne as Paris Saint-Germain win 4-1 to open up a seven-point gap over their nearest rivals at the top of Ligue 1. Marseille end a run of seven matches without a win with a 2-1 success at Lille,
GERMANY: Andre Schubert leads Borussia Monchengladbach to a fifth straight win as caretaker coach with a 3-1 victory over Schalke, who have midfielder Johannes Geis sent off for stamping on Andre Hahn's knee. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scores a hat-trick as Borussia Dortmund beat bottom side Augsburg 5-1.
ITALY: Goals from Mohamed ➤

Indonesia

JOHN DUERDEN

Federation ban set to stay as FIFA runs out of patience

Vital need for change as Indonesian game is put in danger

Football suspensions handed out by FIFA are not new to Asia. Kuwait was hit with one in October, but it is expected to be short-lived. Indonesia, though, is different. It always is. After warnings, final warnings and last-minute reprieves, FIFA finally pulled the plug on the federation, known locally as PSSI, in May. The ban, still in place, is due to last until 2016.

It was all down to the usual government interference, but FIFA bears some of the blame for the mess the country's football scene has been in for much of the 21st century. Allowing PSSI president Nurdin Halid to hold his post while serving two prison sentences was a dereliction of duty. The subsequent breakaway league and national team should have brought more than sternly worded letters from Jerome Valcke – and if there is one silver lining for the Frenchman with his own

Resistance...football fans demonstrate outside a federation congress in April

personal suspension, it is surely not having Indonesian-related problems arriving at his desk on a regular basis.

Then there was the tragedy of Diego Mendieta. The Paraguayan footballer died all alone in Indonesia in 2012, unable to afford medical treatment due to the fact that he had not been paid by his club.

When the suspension finally came, some felt it was a good thing, citing the example of Garuda, the national airline. Banned from entering European airspace because of a dodgy safety record in 2007, Garuda went away to rebuild and came back a much stronger entity to win awards.

At the moment, however, there are few signs football will go the same way. The reaction of state president Joko Widodo was fairly sanguine. "It doesn't matter if we are absent from international competitions for a while as long as we can win big in the future," he said.

It seems as if it does matter. The national team was banned from qualification for the 2018 World Cup and the 2019 Asian Cup. Clubs were ejected from the AFC Cup, the continental competition second only to the Champions League. Youth development programmes are stopping, schemes that are crucial in a massive, sprawling archipelago that is only going to come close to reaching its potential when the 100 million children have access to good coaches and decent facilities. National team coach Pieter Huistra is on the verge of leaving as the Dutchman has virtually nothing to do and has found difficulty getting paid.

Plea...FIFpro Asia chairman Brendan Schwab

> "It doesn't matter if we are absent for a while as long as we can win big in the future"
> State president Joko Widodo's reaction to the ban

Players and other club employees are finding the same. There have been unofficial tournaments such as the recently concluded President's Cup but this was for a select few clubs. Most clubs need money as much as they need games. Players and officials will be lost to the game if something does not change soon. Talk among supporters and media is starting to shift more towards European football and it doesn't help that rivals are looking good – a Malaysian club is in the Final of the AFC Cup while Thailand's national team is going from strength to strength.

Officials from the AFC and FIFA were due in the country at the end of October and the delegation is due to report back to FIFA's executive committee in December. That could be a vital step towards the ban being lifted but there is not much optimism in the world's fourth-most populous country that the end of the ban is imminent. Privately, Indonesian officials believe it will stretch well into next year but this extension will inevitably prolong the damage taking place lower down the ladder.

More cynical fans believe that the FIFA ban gives PSSI and officials the perfect excuse for future failures. Brendan Schwab, chairman of FIFpro – the global players' union – in Asia has called for more to be done. "The PSSI can't hide behind FIFA," says Schwab. "It, together with the government and all key stakeholders, must now put the interests of Indonesian football first by embracing fundamental governance and business practice reform to achieve a lasting solution."

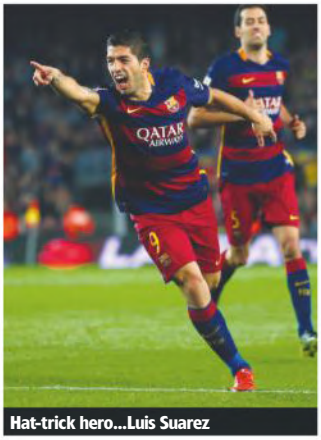
There have been problems in the past but there was always massive potential to keep spirits up. For now, even the potential is in danger of slipping away. WS

In jeopardy...Indonesia (in white) take on Vietnam in the Southeast Asian Games

➤ Salah and Gervinho give Roma a 2-1 win at Fiorentina to put them top of Serie A for the first time this term.
NORWAY: Rosenborg claim the Norwegian title for a record 23rd time, with two games to spare, with a 3-3 draw at Stromsgodset.
PORTUGAL: Sporting Lisbon move three points clear at the top of the Primeira Liga with a comfortable 3-0 win against Benfica.
RUSSIA: Spartak Moscow twice battle back from a goal down to beat city rivals Dynamo 3-2.
SPAIN: Luis Suarez scores a hat-trick as Barcelona come from behind to beat Eibar 3-1.
USA: For the second time in three years, New York Red Bulls win the Supporters' Shield – for best regular-season record – with a 2-1 win over Chicago Fire on the last day of the campaign.

Monday October 26

ENGLAND: Jose Mourinho is



Hat-trick hero...Luis Suarez

charged by the FA "with misconduct in relation to his language and/or behaviour towards the match officials in or around the dressing room area at half-time" during Chelsea's 2-1 defeat at West Ham United.
GERMANY: Hoffenheim fire Markus Gisdol and replace him with Dutch coach Huub Stevens. Schalke midfielder Johannes Geis is banned for five games following his red card against Borussia Monchengladbach for a dangerous tackle on Andre Hahn, who was forced off just nine minutes after coming on as a sub.
NEW ZEALAND: The future of Wellington Phoenix, the only New Zealand club in Australia's top flight, is put in doubt as they are denied a request for a 10-year extension on their A-League licence.
SPAIN: After losing four of their opening five games in La Liga, Athletic Bilbao move up to 12th place with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Sporting Gijon. WS

World Service

Internationals

2018 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

SOUTH AMERICA section

● *4.5 finals places available*

(the 10 confederation members are playing in a single group; each team will play 18 games, 9x2; games to be completed by Oct 2017)

Oct 8 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 0
Ecuador 2 (Erazo 81, Caicedo 82)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bascunan (Chl)
Argentina: Romero - Roncaglia, Garay, Otamendi, Mas, Biglia, Mascherano, Pastore (Lavezzi 70), Di Maria, Aguero (Tevez 24), Correa.
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes, Achilier, Erazo, W Ayovi, A Valencia, Noboa, Quinonez (Castillo 75), Montero (Martinez 77), Bolanos, Caicedo (Mena 84).

Oct 8 - La Paz
Bolivia 0
Uruguay 2 (Caceres 9, Godin 68)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Loustau (Arg)
Bolivia: D Vaca - Zampiery, Zenteno, Martelli, Torrico, Veizaga, Chumacero (Lizio 60), Castro (Diaz 46), Campos (Cardozo 68), Arce, Duk.
Sent off: Torrico 70.
Uruguay: Muslera - Caceres, Gimenez, Godin, A Pereira, Corujo, Gonzalez, Sanchez (Lodeiro 73), C Rodriguez (Mayada 37), Hernandez (Rolan 61), Stuani.

Oct 8 - Santiago
Chile 2 (Vargas 72, Sanchez 89)
Brazil 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Zambrano (Ecu)
Chile: Bravo - Jara, G Medel, Silva (M Gonzalez 41), Isla, M Diaz (Vilches 82), Vidal, Valdivia (Fernandez 63), Beausejour, Sanchez, Vargas.
Brazil: Jefferson - Daniel Alves, Miranda, David Luiz (Marquinhos 36), Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo (Lucas Lima 82), Elias, Willian, Oscar, Douglas Costa, Hulk (Ricardo Oliveira 77).

Oct 8 - Barranquilla
Colombia 2 (Gutierrez 36, Cardona 90+4)
Peru 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Arias (Par)
Colombia: Ospina - Arias, Zapata, Murillo, Fabra, Sanchez, Guarin (Mejia 63), Cuadrado, Cardona, Gutierrez (Falcao 75), Bacca (Castillo 90+2).
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Zambrano (Ramos 78), Ascues, Cespedes, Ballon, Lobaton, Cueva, Carrillo (Hurtado 81), Pizarro (Reyna 72), Guerrero.

Oct 8 - Puerto Ordaz
Venezuela 0
Paraguay 1 (D Gonzalez 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Buitrago (Col)
Venezuela: Baroja - Rosales, Vizcarrondo, Lucena, Cichero, Rincon, Seijas, Suarez (Murillo 80), C Gonzalez (Guerra 61), Falcon (Martinez 73), S Rondon.
Paraguay: A Silva - Aguilar, Da Silva, Samudio, B Valdez, N Ortigoza, R Ortiz (V Caceres 66), Benitez, Gonzalez, Santander (Bobadilla 73), Barrios (Fabbro 86).

Oct13 - Fortaleza
Brazil 3 (Willian 1, 41, Ricardo Oliveira 73)
Venezuela 1 (Santos 64)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Fedorczuk (Uru)
Brazil: Alisson - Daniel Alves, Miranda, Marquinhos, Filipe Luis, Luiz Gustavo, Elias, Oscar (Lucas Lima 65), Willian, Ricardo Oliveira (Hulk 80), Douglas Costa (Kaka 74).
Venezuela: Baroja - Rosales, Vizcarrondo, Amorebieta, Cichero, Rincon, Seijas (A Gonzalez 80), Guerra (Murillo 46), Vargas (Figuera 46), S Rondon, Santos.

Oct13 - Quito
Ecuador 2 (M Bolanos 81, F Caicedo pen 90+4)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ricci (Bra)
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes (Martinez 75), Achilier (Mina 60), Erazo, W Ayovi, A Valencia, Quinonez (Cazares 46), Noboa, Montero, Bolanos, Caicedo.
Bolivia: D Vaca - Zampiery, Martelli, Eguino, Zenteno, Morales (Rios 85), Galindo (Melean 62), Flores, Veizaga, Campos, Duk (Alvarez 80).

Oct13 - Asuncion
Paraguay 0
Argentina 0
Ref: Cunha (Uru)
Paraguay: A Silva - B Valdez, Aguilar, Da Silva, Samudio, Gonzalez (Romero 77), N Ortigoza (Aranda 37), V Caceres, R Ortiz, Lezcano, Barrios (Santander 67).
Argentina: Romero - Zabaleta, Otamendi, Funes Mori, Mas, Mascherano, Kranevitter, Pastore (Lamela 68), Di Maria, Tevez (Dybala 74), Lavezzi (Gaitan 84).

Oct13 - Lima
Peru 3 (Farfan 10, pen 35, Guerrero 90+2)
Chile 4 (Sanchez 7, 44, Vargas 41, 49)
HT: 2-3. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Zambrano, Ascues, Yotun, Ballon, Lobaton (Tapia 46), Cueva, Carrillo (Reyna 43; Sanchez 72), Farfan, Guerrero.
Sent off: Cueva 22.
Chile: Bravo - Isla, G Medel, Jara, Mena, Vidal (Gutierrez 64), Valdivia, M Diaz (Silva 53), Sanchez, Vargas (Orellana 81), M Gonzalez.

Oct13 - Montevideo
Uruguay 3 (Godin 33, Rolan 51, Hernandez 87)
Colombia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lopes (Bra)
Uruguay: Muslera - M Pereira, Gimenez, Godin, Caceres (Lodeiro 18), Corujo, Gonzalez (Nandez 85), Sanchez (Hernandez 71), A Pereira, Rolan, Stuani.
Colombia: Ospina - Arias (Falcao 71), Zapata, Murillo, Fabra, Sanchez, Cardona, Guarin (Torres 57), Cuadrado, Gutierrez (Castillo 57), Bacca.
Sent off: Cuadrado 90+2.

2018 WC QUALS – SOUTH AMERICA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uruguay	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Ecuador	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Chile	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Paraguay	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Brazil	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Colombia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Argentina	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Peru	2	0	0	2	3	6	0
Venezuela	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Bolivia	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

● *The top 4 will qualify for the finals; the 5th-placed country will meet the Oceania play-off round winner in a play-off for a place in the finals*

Next 2 rounds

Nov 12, 2015	Argentina v Brazil
	Bolivia v Venezuela
	Chile v Colombia
	Ecuador v Uruguay
	Peru v Paraguay
Nov 17, 2015	Brazil v Peru
	Colombia v Argentina
	Paraguay v Bolivia
	Uruguay v Chile
	Venezuela v Ecuador

ASIA section

● *4.5 finals places available*

1st round

(for the 12 lowest-ranked countries)
1st legs - Mar12; 2nd legs - Mar17/23, 2015
Cambodia v Macau 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
East Timor v Mongolia 4-1, 1-0 (agg 5-1)
India v Nepal 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0)
Sri Lanka v Bhutan 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)
Taiwan v Brunei 0-1, 2-0 (agg 2-1)
Yemen v Pakistan 3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)

2nd round

(the remaining 34 countries entered at this stage; each team will play 8 games, 4x2, except Group F, 6 games, 3x2; full match schedule below tables)

Group A

Oct 8 - Dili
East Timor 1 (Ramon Saro 54)
Palestine 1 (Abu Nahyeh 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kim Dong-jin (SKo)

Oct 8 - Jeddah
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Sahlawi 45, pen 89)
United Arab Emirates 1 (Khalil 18)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)

Oct13 - Dili
East Timor 0
Malaysia 1 (Amri 10)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Kim Hee-gon (SKo)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	4	4	0	0	15	3	12
UAE	4	2	1	1	12	2	7
Palestine	4	1	2	1	9	4	5
Malaysia	5	1	1	3	2	20	4
East Timor	5	0	2	3	2	11	2

2015

Jun 11	Malaysia v East Timor	1-1
	Saudi Arabia v Palestine	3-2
Jun 15	East Timor v UAE	0-1
	Malaysia v Palestine	0-6
Sep 3	Saudi Arabia v East Timor	7-0
	UAE v Malaysia	10-0
Sep 8	Malaysia v Saudi Arabia (awd)	0-3
	Palestine v UAE	0-0
Oct 8	East Timor v Palestine	1-1
	Saudi Arabia v UAE	2-1
Oct 13	East Timor v Malaysia	0-1
Nov 5	Palestine v Saudi Arabia	
Nov 12	Palestine v Malaysia	
	UAE v East Timor	
Nov 17	East Timor v Saudi Arabia	
	Malaysia v UAE	

2016

Mar 24	Saudi Arabia v Malaysia
	UAE v Palestine
Mar 29	Palestine v East Timor
	UAE v Saudi Arabia

Group B

Oct 8 - Amman
Jordan 2 (Abdel-Fattah pen 47, Al Dardour 84)
Australia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Toma (Jap)
Australia: Federici - Elrich, Wright (Juric 75), Spiranovic, Davidson, Rogic (Cahill 66), Milligan, Mooy, Leckie, Oar (Burns 46), Luongo.

Oct 8 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 2 (Duyshobekov 7, Zemlianukhin pen 90+5)
Tajikistan 2 (M Dzhalilov 65, Nazarov pen 71)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Bonyadifard (Irn)
Sent off: F Vasiev (Tajikistan) 90

Oct13 - Amman
Jordan 3 (Al Dardour 65, 90+4, Abdel-Fattah 67)
Tajikistan 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Al Hilali (Oma)

Oct13 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 2 (Lux 27, I Amirov 89)
Bangladesh 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Abdulhusin (Bhr)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jordan	5	4	1	0	12	1	13
Australia	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
Kyrgyzstan	5	2	2	1	8	5	8
Tajikistan	5	0	2	3	4	12	2
Bangladesh	5	0	1	4	2	15	1

2015

Jun 11	Bangladesh v Kyrgyzstan	1-3
	Tajikistan v Jordan	1-3
Jun 16	Bangladesh v Tajikistan	1-1
	Kyrgyzstan v Australia	1-2
Sep 3	Australia v Bangladesh	5-0
	Jordan v Kyrgyzstan	0-0
Sep 8	Bangladesh v Jordan	0-4
	Tajikistan v Australia	0-3
Oct 8	Jordan v Australia	2-0
	Kyrgyzstan v Tajikistan	2-2
Oct 13	Jordan v Tajikistan	3-0
	Kyrgyzstan v Bangladesh	2-0
Nov 12	Australia v Kyrgyzstan	
	Tajikistan v Bangladesh	
Nov 17	Bangladesh v Australia	
	Kyrgyzstan v Jordan	

2016

Mar 24	Australia v Tajikistan
	Jordan v Bangladesh
Mar 29	Australia v Jordan
	Tajikistan v Kyrgyzstan

Group C

Oct 8 - Thimphu
Bhutan 3 (Tshering Dorji 85, C Gyeltshen 88, Basnet 90+1)
Maldives 4 (Nashid 11, Ashfaq 23, 33, pen 52)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Shamsuzzaman (Ban)

Oct 8 - Doha
Qatar 1 (Boudiaf 22)
China 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ko (SKo)

Oct13 - Thimphu
Bhutan 0
Hong Kong 1 (Chan Siu Ki 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Asimov (Uzb)

Oct13 - Doha
Qatar 4 (Khoukhi 28, 70, Kasola 69, Musa 90+2)
Maldives 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	5	5	0	0	24	2	15
Hong Kong	5	3	1	1	12	3	10
China	4	2	1	1	9	1	7
Maldives	5	1	0	4	4	13	3
Bhutan	5	0	0	5	3	33	0

2015

Jun 11	Hong Kong v Bhutan	7-0
	Maldives v Qatar	0-1
Jun 16	Bhutan v China	0-6
	Hong Kong v Maldives	2-0
Sep 3	China v Hong Kong	0-0
	Qatar v Bhutan	15-0
Sep 8	Hong Kong v Qatar	2-3
	Maldives v China	0-3
Oct 8	Bhutan v Maldives	3-4
	Qatar v China	1-0
Oct 13	Bhutan v Hong Kong	0-1
	Qatar v Maldives	4-0
Nov 12	China v Bhutan	
	Maldives v Hong Kong	
Nov 17	Bhutan v Qatar	
	Hong Kong v China	

2016

Mar 24	China v Maldives
	Qatar v Hong Kong
Mar 29	China v Qatar
	Maldives v Bhutan

Group D

Oct 8 - Muscat
Oman 1 (Suhail 52)
Iran 1 (Hosseini 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kovalenko (Uzb)
Iran: A Haghighi - Ghafouri, Montazeri, Hosseini, Dejagah, O Ebrahimi, Teymourian, Amiri (Torabi 60), Hajsafi, Taremi (Alishah 82), Azmoun (K Rezaei 86).

Oct 8 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 2 (Abylov 9, Amanov 60)
India 1 (Lalpekhlua 29)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Tufaylieh (Syr)

Oct13 - Muscat
Oman 3 (A Mubarak 55, Al Muqbali 65, 84)
India 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)

Oct13 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 1 (Abylov 16)
Guam 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Al Khudair (Sau)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	5	3	2	0	9	3	11
Iran	4	2	2	0	11	2	8
Turkmenistan	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
Guam	5	2	1	2	3	8	7
India	5	0	0	5	3	12	0

2015

Jun 11	Guam v Turkmenistan	1-0
	India v Oman	1-2
Jun 16	Guam v India	2-1
	Turkmenistan v Iran	1-1
Sep 3	Iran v Guam	6-0
	Oman v Turkmenistan	3-1
Sep 8	Guam v Oman	0-0
	India v Iran	0-3
Oct 8	Oman v Iran	1-1
	Turkmenistan v India	2-1
Oct 13	Oman v India	3-0
	Turkmenistan v Guam	1-0
Nov 12	India v Guam	
	Iran v Turkmenistan	
Nov 17	Guam v Iran	
	Turkmenistan v Oman	
2016		
Mar 24	Iran v India	
	Oman v Guam	
Mar 29	India v Turkmenistan	
	Iran v Oman	

Group E

Oct 8 - Singapore
Singapore 1 (Khairul Amri 72)
Afghanistan 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ng (HK)

Oct 8 - Seeb, Oman
Syria 0
Japan 3 (Honda pen 55, Okazaki 70, Usami 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Japan: Nishikawa - G Sakai, Makino, Yoshida, Nagatomo, Kagawa (Kiyotake 78), Yamaguchi, Hasebe, Honda, Haraguchi (Usami 66), Okazaki (Muto 84).

Oct13 - Singapore
Singapore 2 (Faris 16, Fazrul 47)
Cambodia 1 (Suhana 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kim Dae-young (SKo)

Oct13 - Seeb, Oman
Syria 5 (Omari 9, 21, 83, Al Mawas 32, 90)
Afghanistan 2 (N Amiri 44, F Shayesteh 78)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	5	4	0	1	18	5	12
Japan	4	3	1	0	12	0	10
Singapore	5	3	1	1	7	2	10
Afghanistan	5	1	0	4	3	18	3
Cambodia	5	0	0	5	1	16	0

2015

Jun 11	Afghanistan v Syria	0-6
	Cambodia v Singapore	0-4
Jun 16	Cambodia v Afghanistan	0-1
	Japan v Singapore	0-0
Sep 3	Japan v Cambodia	3-0
	Syria v Singapore	1-0
Sep 8	Afghanistan v Japan	0-6
	Cambodia v Syria	0-6
Oct 8	Singapore v Afghanistan	1-0
	Syria v Japan	0-3
Oct 13	Singapore v Cambodia	2-1
	Syria v Afghanistan	5-2
Nov 12	Afghanistan v Cambodia	
	Singapore v Japan	
Nov 17	Cambodia v Japan	
	Singapore v Syria	
2016		
Mar 24	Japan v Afghanistan	
	Syria v Cambodia	
Mar 29	Afghanistan v Singapore	
	Japan v Syria	

Group F

Oct 8 - Hanoi
Vietnam 1 (Le Cong Vinh 27)
Iraq 1 (Mahmoud pen 90+7)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Beath (Aus)

Oct13 - Hanoi
Vietnam 0
Thailand 3 (Kroekrit 29, Dinh Tien Thanh og 55, Theerathon 70)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhr)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Iraq	3	1	2	0	8	4	5
Vietnam	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Taiwan	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

Indonesia excluded after being suspended by FIFA for government interference in the national FA

2015

May 24	Thailand v Vietnam	1-0
Jun 16	Taiwan v Thailand	0-2
Sep 3	Iraq v Taiwan	5-1
Sep 8	Taiwan v Vietnam	1-2
	Thailand v Iraq	2-2
Oct 8	Vietnam v Iraq	1-1
Oct 13	Vietnam v Thailand	0-3
Nov 12	Thailand v Taiwan	
Nov 17	Taiwan v Iraq	
2016		
Mar 24	Iraq v Thailand	
	Vietnam v Taiwan	
Mar 29	Iraq v Vietnam	

Group G

Oct 8 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 0
South Korea 1 (Koo Ja-cheol 12)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Park Joo-ho, Kim Young-gwon, Kwak Tae-hwi, Jang Hyun-soo, Ki Sung-yueng, Jung Woo-young, Nam Tae-hee (Han Kook-young 63), Kwon Chang-hoon (Lee Jae-sung 88), Koo Ja-cheol, Suk Hyun-jun (Ji Dong-won 76).

Oct 8 - Bangkok, Thailand
Myanmar 0
Lebanon 2 (Maatouk 28, Abbas Ahmed Atwi 90+3)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Abdul Wahab (Mly)

Oct13 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 0
Lebanon 0
Ref: Al Jeneibi (UAE)

Oct13 - Bangkok, Thailand
Myanmar 3 (Suan Lam Mang 13, Kyaw Ko Ko 32, Aung Thu 50)
Laos 1 (Sayavutthi 2)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Abbas (Bhr)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	4	4	0	0	14	0	12
Kuwait	5	3	1	1	12	1	10
Lebanon	5	2	1	2	4	4	7
Myanmar	5	1	1	3	5	16	4
Laos	5	0	1	4	3	17	1

2015

Jun 11	Laos v Myanmar	2-2
	Lebanon v Kuwait	0-1
Jun 16	Laos v Lebanon	0-2
	Myanmar v South Korea	0-2
Sep 3	Kuwait v Myanmar	9-0
	South Korea v Laos	8-0
Sep 8	Laos v Kuwait	0-2
	Lebanon v South Korea	0-3
Oct 8	Kuwait v South Korea	0-1
	Myanmar v Lebanon	0-2
Oct 13	Kuwait v Lebanon	0-0
	Myanmar v Laos	3-1
Nov 12	Lebanon v Laos	
	South Korea v Myanmar	
Nov 17	Laos v South Korea	
	Myanmar v Kuwait	
2016		
Mar 24	Kuwait v Laos	
	South Korea v Lebanon	
Mar 29	Lebanon v Myanmar	
	South Korea v Kuwait	

Group H

Oct 8 - Riffa
Bahrain 0
Uzbekistan 4 (Sergeev 52, Ahmedov 57, Rashidov 66, Shomurodov 90+5)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Tojo (Jap)

Oct 8 - Pyongyang
North Korea 0
Philippines 0
Ref: Ma (Chn)

Oct13 - Riffa
Bahrain 2 (Abdul-Latif 53, Adnan 61)
Philippines 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Sarray (Irq)

Oct13 - Pyongyang
North Korea 1 (Jong Il-gwan pen 12)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Liu (HK)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Korea	5	4	1	0	9	2	13
Uzbekistan	4	3	0	1	12	5	9
Philippines	5	2	1	2	5	8	7
Bahrain	5	2	0	3	7	7	6
Yemen	5	0	0	5	0	11	0

2015

Jun 11	Philippines v Bahrain	2-1
	Yemen v N Korea (awarded)	0-3
Jun 16	North Korea v Uzbekistan	4-2
	Yemen v Philippines	0-2
Sep 3	Bahrain v North Korea	0-1
	Uzbekistan v Yemen	1-0
Sep 8	Philippines v Uzbekistan	1-5
	Yemen v Bahrain	0-4
Oct 8	Bahrain v Uzbekistan	0-4
	North Korea v Philippines	0-0
Oct 13	Bahrain v Philippines	2-0
	North Korea v Yemen	1-0
Nov 12	Philippines v Yemen	
	Uzbekistan v North Korea	
Nov 17	North Korea v Bahrain	
	Yemen v Uzbekistan	
2016		
Mar 24	Bahrain v Yemen	
	Uzbekistan v Philippines	
Mar 29	Philippines v North Korea	
	Uzbekistan v Bahrain	

● *The 8 group winners and the 4 runners-up with the best record will qualify for the 3rd round (the same teams will also qualify for the 2019 Asian Cup finals)*

3rd round

The 12 qualifiers will be drawn into 2 6-team groups (games to be played Aug 2016-Sep 2017)
● *The top 2 in both groups will qualify for the finals; the 2 3rd-placed countries will meet in the Asia section play-off, the winner of which will meet the 4th-placed CONCACAF country in a play-off for a place in the finals*

AFRICA section

● *5 finals places available*

1st round

(for the 26 lowest-ranked countries)

1st legs

Oct 7 - Moroni
Comoros 0
Lesotho 0
Ref: Rakotojaona (Mad)
Sent off: Kuenane (Lesotho) 78

Oct 7 - Belle Vue Maurel
Mauritius 2 (Sophie pen 68, J Bru 77)
Kenya 5 (Omollo 18, 83, Timbe 23, Shakava 49, Olunga 87)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Lengani (Mwi)

Oct 7 - Victoria
Seychelles 0
Burundi 1 (Abdul Razak 17)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Nigussie (Eth)

Oct 7 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 2 (Samatta 19, Ulimwengu 23)
Malawi 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Wiish (Som)

Oct 7/8[1] - Juba
South Sudan 1 (Pretino 5)
Mauritania 1 (Bagili 3)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bakasambe (Uga)
[1]Match abandoned in the10th minute because of torrential rain; remaining 80 minutes played the next day

Oct 8 - Monrovia
Liberia 1 (Jebor pen 36)
Guinea-Bissau 1 (Anido 63)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Duarte (CVI)

Oct 8 - Sao Tome
Sao Tome e Principe 1 (Luis Leal 87)
Ethiopia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Alhadi Mahamat (Chd)

Oct 9 - Djibouti
Djibouti 0
Swaziland 6 (Mkhontfo 45+1, Ndzinisa 62, Muzi Dlamini 74, Hlatjwako 77, Tsabedze 83, Lukhele 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ndabihawenimana (Bdi)

Oct 9 - Bakau
Gambia 1 (Savage 78)
Namibia 1 (Stephanus 62)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Karembe (Mli)

Oct 9 - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Somalia 0
Niger 2 (Maazou 59, pen 62)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kossai (Tun)

Oct10 - Antananarivo, Madagascar[1]
Central African Republic 0
Madagascar 3 (Rabeson 27, Rakotoharimalala 39, Johann 65)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)
[1]Played in Madagascar because of unrest in Central African Republic

Oct10 - N'Djamena
Chad 1 (Djimrangar 47)
Sierra Leone 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Fagla (Tog)

Oct10 - Asmara
Eritrea 0
Botswana 2 (Moyana 21, Mogorosi 64)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Nour El Din (Egy)

2nd legs

Oct11 - Addis Ababa
Ethiopia 3 (Dawit Fekadu 1, Gatoch pen 47, Ramkel 75)
Sao Tome e Principe 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ishimwe (Rwa)
Ethiopia 3-1 on agg

Oct11 - Nairobi
Kenya 0
Mauritius 0
Ref: Cosmas (Cam)
Kenya 5-2 on agg

Oct11 - Blantyre
Malawi 1 (J Banda 43)
Tanzania 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Martins de Carvalho (Ang)
Tanzania 2-1 on agg

Oct13 - Francistown
Botswana 3 (Ngele 15, 79, Mogorosi 21)
Eritrea 1 (Goitom 9)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Fred (Sey)
Botswana 5-1 on agg

Oct13 - Bujumbura
Burundi 2 (Abdul Razak pen 71, 81)
Seychelles 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Alamen (Sud)
Burundi 3-0 on agg

Oct13 - Bissau
Guinea-Bissau 1 (Ibraime 43)
Liberia 3 (Jebor 8, 12, 90+6)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Udoh (Nga)
Liberia 4-2 on agg

Oct13 - Maseru
Lesotho 1 (Seturumane 17)
Comoros 1 (M M'Changama 71)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Chirinda (Moz)
Agg1-1; Comoros on away goals

Oct13 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 2 (Ramanamahefa 15, Andrianantenaina 34)
Central African Republic 2 (Gourrier 7, Dagoulou 44)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
Madagascar 5-2 on agg

Oct13 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 4 (Ahmed 4, Bagili 62, M Samba 85, Diakite 90+2)
South Sudan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gomes (GuB)
Sent off: Deng (South Sudan) 86
Mauritania 5-1 on agg

Oct13 - Windhoek
Namibia 2 (Stephanus 42, Somaeb 63)
Gambia 1 (Dibba 10)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)
Namibia 3-2 on agg

Oct13 - Niamey
Niger 4 (Cisse 13, 68, Maazou 18, 32)
Somalia 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Kane (Sen)
Niger 6-0 on agg

Oct13 - Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Sierra Leone 2 (Alhaji Kamara 70, Abdul Sesay 79)
Chad 1 (Djimrangar 45)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Bangoura (Gui)
Agg 2-2; Chad on away goals

Oct17 - Lobamba
Swaziland 2 (Hlatjwako 6, 43)
Djibouti 1 (Issa 22)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Chutooree (Mrs)
Swaziland 8-1 on agg

2nd round draw
(the remaining 27 countries enter at this stage)
Angola v South Africa
Benin v Burkina Faso
Botswana v Mali
Burundi v DR Congo
Chad v Egypt
Comoros v Ghana
Ethiopia v Congo
Kenya v Cape Verde Islands
Liberia v Ivory Coast
Libya v Rwanda
Madagascar v Senegal
Mauritania v Tunisia
Morocco v Equatorial Guinea
Mozambique v Gabon
Namibia v Guinea
Niger v Cameroon
Sudan v Zambia
Swaziland v Nigeria
Tanzania v Algeria
Togo v Uganda
1st & 2nd legs - Nov 9-17, 2015

3rd round
The 20 qualifiers will be drawn into 5 4-team groups (games to be played Oct 2016-Nov 2017)
● *The 5 group winners will qualify for the finals*

CONCACAF section
● *3.5 finals places available*

1st round
(for the 14 lowest-ranked countries)
1st legs - Mar 22-27; 2nd legs - Mar 26-31, 2015
Bahamas v Bermuda 0-5, 0-3 (agg 0-8)
Barbados v US Virgin Islands 0-1, 4-0 (agg 4-1)
Belize v Cayman Islands
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Belize on away goals)
British Virgin Islands v Dominica 2-3, 0-0 (agg 2-3)
Curacao v Montserrat 2-1, 2-2 (agg 4-3)
Nicaragua v Anguilla 5-0, 3-0 (agg 8-0)
St Kitts & Nevis v Turks & Caicos 6-2, 6-2 (agg 12-4)

2nd round
(the 13 next lowest-ranked countries entered at this stage)
1st legs - June 7-12; 2nd legs - June14-16, 2015
Antigua & Barbuda v St Lucia 1-3, 4-1 (agg 5-4)
Aruba v Barbados 0-2, 3-0 (awarded) (agg 3-2)
Curacao v Cuba
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Curacao on away goals)
Dominica v Canada 0-2, 0-4 (agg 0-6)
Dominican Republic v Belize 1-2, 0-3 (agg 1-5)
Guatemala v Bermuda 0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)
Nicaragua v Surinam 1-0, 3-1 (agg 4-1)
Puerto Rico v Grenada 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
St Kitts & Nevis v El Salvador 2-2, 1-4 (agg 3-6)
St Vincent & The Grenadines v Guyana
2-2, 4-4 (agg 6-6, St Vincent on away goals)

3rd round
(the 2 next lowest-ranked countries entered at this stage)
1st legs - Sep 4; 2nd legs - Sep 8, 2015
Antigua & Barbuda v Guatemala 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
Canada v Belize 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
Curacao v El Salvador 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2)
Grenada v Haiti 1-3, 0-3 (agg 1-6)
Jamaica v Nicaragua 2-3, 2-0 (agg 4-3)
St Vincent & The Grenadines v Aruba
2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2)

4th round draw
(the remaining 6 countries enter at this stage; each team will play 6 games, 3x2; games to be played Nov 2015-Sep 2016)

Group A
Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico

1st 2 rounds
Nov 13, 2015 Canada v Honduras
Mexico v El Salvador
Nov 17, 2015 El Salvador v Canada
Honduras v Mexico

Group B
Costa Rica, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama

1st 2 rounds
Nov 13, 2015 Costa Rica v Haiti
Jamaica v Panama
Nov 17, 2015 Haiti v Jamaica
Panama v Costa Rica

Group C
Guatemala, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, United States

1st 2 rounds
Nov 13, 2015 Guatemala v Trinidad & Tobago
USA v St Vincent & Grenadines
Nov 17, 2015 Trinidad & Tobago v USA
St Vincent & Gr'dines v Guatemala

● *The top 2 in each group will qualify for the 5th round*

5th round
The 6 qualifiers will form a single group (games to be played Nov 2016-Oct 2017)
● *The top 3 will qualify for the finals; the 4th-placed country will meet the winner of the Asia section play-off in a play-off for a place in the finals*

OCEANIA section
● *0.5 finals places available*

1st round
(for the 4 lowest-ranked countries)
All played in Nuku'alofa, Tonga
Aug 31, 2015 Tonga v Cook Islands 0-3
Samoa v American Samoa 3-2
Sep 2, 2015 Cook Islands v Samoa 1-0
Tonga v American Samoa 1-2
Sep 4, 2015 Tonga v Samoa 0-3
American Samoa v Cook Is 2-0

2018 WC QUALS – OCEANIA – 1ST RND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Samoa (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Amer Samoa	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Cook Islands	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Tonga	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

● *Samoa qualified for the 2nd round*

2nd round draw
(the remaining 7 countries enter at this stage; games to be played May 2016-June 2016)

Group A
New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti

Group B
Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

● *The top 3 in both groups will qualify for the 3rd round*

3rd round
The 6 qualifiers will be drawn into 2 3-team groups (games to be played Mar 2017-Oct 2017)
● *The 2 group winners will qualify for the play-off round*

Play-off round
The 2 qualifiers will meet in a play-off (games to be played in Oct 2017)
● *The play-off round winner will meet the 5th-placed South American country in a play-off for a place in the finals*

EUROPE section
● *13 finals places available (excluding the place for hosts* **Russia**, *who qualify automatically)*

Draw
(games to be played Sep 2016-Oct 2017)

Group A
Belarus, Bulgaria, France, Holland, Luxembourg, Sweden

Group B
Andorra, Faroe Islands, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Switzerland

Group C
Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Germany, Northern Ireland, Norway, San Marino

Group D
Austria, Georgia, Moldova, Republic of Ireland, Serbia, Wales

Group E
Armenia, Denmark, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Poland, Romania

Group F
England, Lithuania, Malta, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia

Group G
Albania, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Spain

Group H
Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece

Group I
Croatia, Finland, Iceland, Turkey, Ukraine

● *The 9 group winners will qualify for the finals; the 8 runners-up with the best record will be paired in 4 play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals*

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS

Group A
Oct10 - Prague
Czech Republic 0
Turkey 2 (Selcuk Inan pen 62, Calhanoglu 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,190. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Czech Republic: Vaclik - Kaderabek, Suchy, Prochazka, Novak, Darida, Pavelka, Dockal (Petrzela 78), Sural (Skoda 67), Krejci (Skalak 54), Lafata.
Turkey: Volkan Babacan - Sener, Serdar, Hakan Balta, Caner, Selcuk Inan, Ozan, Ozyakup (Mehmet Topal 87), Arda (Gokhan Tore 86), Calhanoglu, Tosun (Volkan Sen 64).

Oct10 - Reykjavik
Iceland 2 (Sigthorsson 5, G Sigurdsson 27)
Latvia 2 (Cauna 49, Sabala 68)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,767. **Ref:** Eskov (Rus)
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason (Ottesen 18), R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, J Gudmundsson, G Sigurdsson, Hallfredsson, B Bjarnason, Finnbogason (Gudjohnsen 65), Sigthorsson.
Latvia: Vanins - Gabovs, Dubra, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Zjuzins (Ikaunieks 85), Tarasovs (Laizans 77), Cauna, Rakels, Sabala, A Visnakovs (Karasausks 65).

Oct10 - Astana
Kazakhstan 1 (Kuat 90+6)
Holland 2 (Wijnaldum 33, Sneijder 50)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 20,716. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Kazakhstan: Pokatilov - Engel, Maliy, Smakov, Logvinenko, Suyumbayev, Konysbayev, Kuat, Islamkhan (Geteriyev 16), Dosmagambetov (Nurgaliyev 81), Schetkin (Khizhnichenko 63).
Holland: Krul (Zoet 81) - Tete, Bruma, Van Dijk, Riedewald, Wijnaldum, Blind, Sneijder (Afellay 80), El Ghazi, Huntelaar (Van Persie 87), Depay.

Oct13 - Amsterdam
Holland 2 (Huntelaar 70, Van Persie 83)
Czech Republic 3 (Kaderabek 24, Sural 35, Van Persie og 66)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Holland: Zoet - Tete, Bruma, Van Dijk (Dost 64), Riedewald (Van Persie 39), Wijnaldum, Blind, Sneijder, El Ghazi (Lens 69), Huntelaar, Depay.
Czech Republic: Cech - Kaderabek, Suchy, M Kadlec, Gebre Selassie, Skalak, Darida, Pavelka, Plasil (Skoda 86), Sural (Kalas 71), Necid (Prochazka 46). *Sent off: Suchy 43.*

Oct13 - Riga
Latvia 0
Kazakhstan 1 (Kuat 65)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,027. **Ref:** McLean (Sco)
Latvia: Vanins - Gabovs, Dubra, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Cauna (E Visnakovs 72), Laizans, Zjuzins (Ikaunieks 83), A Visnakovs (Karasausks 57), Rakels, Sabala.
Kazakhstan: Pokatilov - Engel, Maliy, Logvinenko, Shomko, Dosmagambetov (Konysbayev 68), Kuat, Smakov, Suyumbayev, Khizhnichenko (Schetkin 90), Nuserbayev (Gurman 82).

Oct13 - Konya
Turkey 1 (Selcuk Inan 89)
Iceland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 39,404. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Turkey: Volkan Babacan - Sener, Serdar, Hakan Balta, Caner, Ozan, Selcuk Inan, Ozyakup (Gokhan Tore 62), Volkan Sen (Umut 75), Calhanoglu (Tosun 72), Arda.
Sent off: Gokhan Tore 78.
Iceland: Kristinsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, J Gudmundsson, A Gunnarsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, Bodvarsson (Kjartansson 82), Sigthorsson (Finnbogason 88).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Rep (QF)	10	7	1	2	19	14	22
Iceland (QF)	10	6	2	2	17	6	20
Turkey (QF)	10	5	3	2	14	9	18
Holland	10	4	1	5	17	14	13
Kazakhstan	10	1	2	7	7	18	5
Latvia	10	0	5	5	6	19	5

2014
Sep 9 Czech Republic v Holland 2-1
Iceland v Turkey 3-0
Kazakhstan v Latvia 0-0
Oct 10 Holland v Kazakhstan 3-1
Latvia v Iceland 0-3
Turkey v Czech Republic 1-2
Oct 13 Iceland v Holland 2-0
Kazakhstan v Czech Republic 2-4
Latvia v Turkey 1-1
Nov 16 Czech Republic v Iceland 2-1
Holland v Latvia 6-0
Turkey v Kazakhstan 3-1
2015
Mar 28 Czech Republic v Latvia 1-1
Holland v Turkey 1-1
Kazakhstan v Iceland 0-3
Jun 12 Iceland v Czech Republic 2-1
Kazakhstan v Turkey 0-1
Latvia v Holland 0-2
Sep 3 Czech Republic v Kazakhstan 2-1
Holland v Iceland 0-1
Turkey v Latvia 1-1
Sep 6 Iceland v Kazakhstan 0-0
Latvia v Czech Republic 1-2
Turkey v Holland 3-0
Oct 10 Czech Republic v Turkey 0-2
Iceland v Latvia 2-2
Kazakhstan v Holland 1-2
Oct 13 Holland v Czech Republic 2-3
Latvia v Kazakhstan 0-1
Turkey v Iceland 1-0

Group B
Oct10 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 1 (Lima pen 51)
Belgium 4 (Nainggolan 19, De Bruyne 42, E Hazard pen 56, Depoitre 64)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,032. **Ref:** Gil (Pol)
Andorra: Pol - San Nicolas, Lima, Llovera, M Garcia, Rebes, Rubio, M Vieira (Peppe 86), Moreira (Riera 73), Sonejee (Rodrigues 62), Sanchez.
Belgium: Mignolet - Meunier (Cavanda 81), Alderweireld, Vertonghen, J Lukaku, Nainggolan, Mertens (Chadli 72), Witsel, E Hazard (Bakkali 79), De Bruyne, Depoitre.

Oct10 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Djuric 71, Ibisevic 90)
Wales 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,250. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Mujdza, Spahic (Cocalic 46), Sunjic, Zukanovic, Pjanic, Hadzic (Bicakcic 89), Salihovic, Visca (Djuric 61), Ibisevic, Lulic.
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter, A Williams, N Taylor, B Davies, Allen (D Edwards 85), Richards, Ramsey, Bale, Ledley (Vokes 75), Robson-Kanu (Church 84).

Oct10 - Jerusalem
Israel 1 (Biton 76)
Cyprus 2 (Dossa Junior 58, Demetriou 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,300. **Ref:** Sousa (Por)
Israel: Marciano - Dasa (Dgani 54), Tibi, Tal Ben Haim/D, Ben Harush (Melikson 71), Biton, Kayal, Zahavi, Tal Ben Haim/F, Vermouth (Hemed 65), Dabour.
Cyprus: Giorgallides - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Antoniades, Nikolaou, Laban, Makrides (Economides 84), Efrem (Merkis 86), Mytidis, Makris (Charalambides 46).

Oct13 - Brussels
Belgium 3 (Mertens 64, De Bruyne 78, E Hazard 84)
Israel 1 (Hemed 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 39,773. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Belgium: Mignolet - Alderweireld, Kompany (Meunier 58), Lombaerts, Vertonghen, Nainggolan, Fellaini (Witsel 66), Mertens, De Bruyne, E Hazard, R Lukaku (Origi 66).
Israel: Marciano - Dgani, Tal Ben Haim/D, Tibi, Ben Harush, Peretz, Yeini (Vermouth 77), Kayal (Damari 66), Zahavi, Hemed, Tal Ben Haim/F (Rikan 59).

Oct13 - Nicosia
Cyprus 2 (Charalambides 32, Mytidis 41)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 3 (Medunjanin 13, 44, Djuric 67)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 17,687. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Cyprus: Giorgallides - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Antoniades, Nikolaou (Economides 65), Makrides, Laban (Aloneftis 75), Charalambides (Kolokoudias 83), Mytidis, Efrem.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Mujdza, Sunjic, Spahic, Zukanovic (Djuric 60), Visca (Bicakcic 79), Medunjanin, O Vranjes, Lulic, Pjanic (Salihovic 85), Ibisevic.

Oct13 - Cardiff
Wales 2 (Ramsey 50, Bale 86)
Andorra 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 33,280. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter, A Williams, Chester, B Davies, J Williams (Church 86), Ramsey, Vaughan, Robson-Kanu (D Edwards 23; Lawrence 46), Vokes, Bale.
Andorra: Pol - San Nicolas, Lima, Llovera, Rubio, Rodrigues, M Vieira, Sonejee (Ayala 70), Moreira (Riera 12), Sanchez, Lorenzo (M Garcia 81).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium (QF)	10	7	2	1	24	5	23
Wales (QF)	10	6	3	1	11	4	21
Bosnia-H (QP)	10	5	2	3	17	12	17
Israel	10	4	1	5	16	14	13
Cyprus	10	4	0	6	16	17	12
Andorra	10	0	0	10	4	36	0

2014

Sep 9	Andorra v Wales	1-2
	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Cyprus	1-2
Oct 10	Belgium v Andorra	6-0
	Cyprus v Israel	1-2
	Wales v Bosnia-Herzegovina	0-0
Oct 13	Andorra v Israel	1-4
	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Belgium	1-1
	Wales v Cyprus	2-1
Nov 16	Belgium v Wales	0-0
	Cyprus v Andorra	5-0
	Israel v Bosnia-Herzegovina	3-0

2015

Mar 28	Andorra v Bosnia-Herzegovina	0-3
	Belgium v Cyprus	5-0
	Israel v Wales	0-3
Mar 31	Israel v Belgium	0-1
Jun 12	Andorra v Cyprus	1-3
	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Israel	3-1
	Wales v Belgium	1-0
Sep 3	Belgium v Bosnia-Herzegovina	3-1
	Cyprus v Wales	0-1
	Israel v Andorra	4-0
Sep 6	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Andorra	3-0
	Cyprus v Belgium	0-1
	Wales v Israel	0-0
Oct 10	Andorra v Belgium	1-4
	Bosnia-Herzegovina v Wales	2-0
	Israel v Cyprus	1-2
Oct 13	Belgium v Israel	3-1
	Cyprus v Bosnia-Herzegovina	2-3
	Wales v Andorra	2-0

Group C

Oct 9 - Skopje
Macedonia 0
Ukraine 2 (Seleznyov pen 59, Kravets 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,821. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Macedonia: Pacovski - Brdarovski, Sikov, Ristevski, Zhuta, Alimi, Hasani (Abdurahimi 22), Petrovikj, A Ibraimi, Ilijoski (M Ivanovski 64), Askovski (Nesterovski 78).
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Khacheridi, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Rybalka, Rotan (Malinovskyi 90), Sydorchuk, Yarmolenko (Karavayev 86), Seleznyov (Kravets 74), Konoplyanka.

Oct 9 - Zilina
Slovakia 0
Belarus 1 (Dragun 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,859. **Ref:** Gocek (Tur)
Slovakia: Kozacik - Hubocan, Skrtel, Salata, Svento, Mak (Duda 79), Kucka, Hamsik, Pecovsky (Nemec 60), Weiss (Stoch 71), Duris.
Belarus: Gorbunov - Polyakov, Martynovich, Sivakov, Bordachev (Volodko 40), Stasevich, Dragun, Bressan, Nekhaychik (Politevich 69), Gordeichuk, Signevich (Kislyak 72).
Sent off: Martynovich 65.

Oct 9 - Logrono
Spain 4 (Cazorla 42, 85, Paco Alcacer 67, 80)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,472. **Ref:** Delferiere (Blg)
Spain: Casillas - Juanfran, Bartra, Pique, Jordi Alba, Cazorla, Busquets, Fabregas, Silva (Mata 11), Morata (Paco Alcacer 33), Pedro (Nolito 77).
Luxembourg: Joubert - Delgado, Malget, Chanot, Gerson, Jans, Bensi (Deville 64), Mutsch, Payal, C Martins (Da Mota 79), Joachim (Turpel 90).

Oct12 - Borisov
Belarus 0
Macedonia 0
Att: 1,545. **Ref:** Dingert (Ger)
Belarus: Gorbunov - Polyakov, Politevich, Sivakov, Volodko, Dragun (Putsilo 73), Stasevich, Bressan, Gordeichuk, Nekhaychik (Kislyak 61), Signevich.
Macedonia: Mitov Nilsson - Ristovski, Sikov, Mojsov, Zhuta, Stjepanovic (Alimi 84), Petrovikj, Brdarovski (Abdurahimi 73), A Ibraimi (Nestorovski 86), Trickovski, Trajkovski.

Oct12 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 2 (Mutsch 61, Gerson pen 65)
Slovakia 4 (Hamsik 24, 90+1, Nemec 29, Mak 30)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 2,512. **Ref:** Drachta (Aut)
Luxembourg: Joubert - Delgado (Turpel 81), Philipps, Chanot, Gerson, Jans, Bensi (Thill 66), Mutsch, Payal (Malget 57), C Martins, Joachim.
Slovakia: Kozacik - Gyomber, Skrtel, Hubocan, Svento, Pecovsky, Kucka, Mak (Sabo 87), Hamsik, Weiss (Sestak 72), Nemec (Jakubko 79).

Oct12 - Kiev
Ukraine 0
Spain 1 (Mario 22)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 61,248. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Kucher, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Rotan (Zinchenko 87), Stepanenko, Yarmolenko, Harmash (Rybalka 58), Konoplyanka, Kravets (Seleznyov 87).
Spain: De Gea - Mario, Etxeita, Nacho, Azpilicueta, Thiago, San Jose, Fabregas (Mata 64), Isco, Paco Alcacer (Busquets 85), Nolito (Jordi Alba 75).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (QF)	10	9	0	1	23	3	27
Slovakia (QF)	10	7	1	2	17	8	22
Ukraine (QP)	10	6	1	3	14	4	19
Belarus	10	3	2	5	8	14	11
Luxembourg	10	1	1	8	6	27	4
Macedonia	10	1	1	8	6	18	4

2014

Sep 8	Luxembourg v Belarus	1-1
	Spain v Macedonia	5-1
	Ukraine v Slovakia	0-1
Oct 9	Belarus v Ukraine	0-2
	Macedonia v Luxembourg	3-2
	Slovakia v Spain	2-1
Oct 12	Belarus v Slovakia	1-3
	Luxembourg v Spain	0-4
	Ukraine v Macedonia	1-0
Nov 15	Luxembourg v Ukraine	0-3
	Macedonia v Slovakia	0-2
	Spain v Belarus	3-0

2015

Mar 27	Macedonia v Belarus	1-2
	Slovakia v Luxembourg	3-0
	Spain v Ukraine	1-0
Jun 14	Belarus v Spain	0-1
	Slovakia v Macedonia	2-1
	Ukraine v Luxembourg	3-0
Sep 5	Luxembourg v Macedonia	1-0
	Spain v Slovakia	2-0
	Ukraine v Belarus	3-1
Sep 8	Belarus v Luxembourg	2-0
	Macedonia v Spain	0-1
	Slovakia v Ukraine	0-0
Oct 9	Macedonia v Ukraine	0-2
	Slovakia v Belarus	0-1
	Spain v Luxembourg	4-0
Oct 12	Belarus v Macedonia	0-0
	Luxembourg v Slovakia	2-4
	Ukraine v Spain	0-1

Group D

Oct 8 - Tbilisi
Georgia 4 (Vatsadze 30, 45, Okriashvili pen 35, Kazaishvili 87)
Gibraltar 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 11,330. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
Georgia: Revishvili - Kakabadze, Kashia, Amisulashvili, Grigalava, Okriashvili (Dzalamidze 58), Kankava (Palavandishvili 58), Kazaishvili, Kvekveskiri, Kobakhidze, Vatsadze (Tskhadadze 73).
Gibraltar: J Perez - Garcia, R Casciaro, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Gosling, Walker, L Casciaro (J-P Duarte 76), Bardon, K Casciaro (Yome 85), Cabrera (B Perez 46).

Oct 8 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 1 (Long 70)
Germany 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,604. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Rep Ireland: Given (Randolph 43) - Christie, Keogh, O'Shea, Ward (Meyler 69), Hendrick, McCarthy, Brady, Hoolahan, Walters, D Murphy (Long 65).
Germany: Neuer - Ginter (Bellarabi 77), Boateng, Hummels, Hector, Reus, Gundogan (Volland 85), Kroos, Ozil, T Muller, Gotze (Schurrle 35).

Oct 8 - Glasgow
Scotland 2 (Ritchie 45, S Fletcher 62)
Poland 2 (Lewandowski 3, 90+4)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 49,359. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, R Martin, Hanley, Whittaker, Brown, D Fletcher (McArthur 74), Forrest (Dorrans 84), Naismith (Maloney 69), Ritchie, S Fletcher.
Poland: Fabianski - Piszczek, Pazdan, Glik, Rybus (Wawrzyniak 71), Krychowiak, Maczynski, Grosicki, Blaszczykowski (Olkowski 83), Milik (Jodlowiec 63), Lewandowski.

Oct11 - Leipzig
Germany 2 (T Muller pen 50, Kruse 79)
Georgia 1 (Kankava 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 43,630. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Germany: Neuer - Ginter, Boateng, Hummels, Hector, Gundogan, Kroos, T Muller, Ozil, Reus (Bellarabi 90), Schurrle (Kruse 76).
Georgia: Revishvili - Lobzhanidze, Kverkvelia, Amisulashvili, Kashia, Navalovski, Kankava, Kvekveskiri (Khizanishvili 78), Kazaishvili (Kobakhidze 90), Gelashvili (Vatsadze 46), Okriashvili.

Oct11 - Faro-Loule, Portugal
Gibraltar 0
Scotland 6 (C Martin 25, Maloney 39, S Fletcher 52, 56, 85, Naismith 90+1)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 12,401. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Gibraltar: Robba - Garcia, Barnett, R Chipolina, R Casciaro, J Chipolina, Walker, D Duarte (B Perez 57), L Casciaro (J-P Duarte 82), Bardon, K Casciaro (Yome 89).
Scotland: McGregor - Hutton, Greer, Berra, Robertson, Ritchie (Russell 63), Dorrans, Brown (D Fletcher 63), Maloney, C Martin (Naismith 76), S Fletcher.

Oct11 - Warsaw
Poland 2 (Krychowiak 13, Lewandowski 42)
Republic of Ireland 1 (Walters pen 16)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 57,497. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Poland: Fabianski - Piszczek, Glik, Pazdan, Wawrzyniak, Linetty, Krychowiak, Olkowski (Blaszczykowski 63), Maczynski (Szukala 78), Grosicki (Peszko 85), Lewandowski.
Rep Ireland: Randolph - Coleman, O'Shea, Keogh, Brady, McClean (Hoolahan 73), McCarthy, Whelan (McGeady 58), Hendrick, Walters, Long (Keane 55). *Sent off: O'Shea 90+2.*

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany (QF)	10	7	1	2	24	9	22
Poland (QF)	10	6	3	1	33	10	21
R Ireland (QP)	10	5	3	2	19	7	18
Scotland	10	4	3	3	22	12	15
Georgia	10	3	0	7	10	16	9
Gibraltar	10	0	0	10	2	56	0

2014

Sep 7	Georgia v Republic of Ireland	1-2
	Germany v Scotland	2-1
	Gibraltar v Poland	0-7
Oct 11	Poland v Germany	2-0
	Republic of Ireland v Gibraltar	7-0
	Scotland v Georgia	1-0
Oct 14	Germany v Republic of Ireland	1-1
	Gibraltar v Georgia	0-3
	Poland v Scotland	2-2
Nov 14	Georgia v Poland	0-4
	Germany v Gibraltar	4-0
	Scotland v Republic of Ireland	1-0

2015

Mar 29	Georgia v Germany	0-2
	Republic of Ireland v Poland	1-1
	Scotland v Gibraltar	6-1
Jun 13	Gibraltar v Germany	0-7
	Poland v Georgia	4-0
	Republic of Ireland v Scotland	1-1
Sep 4	Georgia v Scotland	1-0
	Germany v Poland	3-1
	Gibraltar v Republic of Ireland	0-4
Sep 7	Poland v Gibraltar	8-1
	Republic of Ireland v Georgia	1-0
	Scotland v Germany	2-3
Oct 8	Georgia v Gibraltar	4-0
	Republic of Ireland v Germany	1-0
	Scotland v Poland	2-2
Oct 11	Germany v Georgia	2-1
	Gibraltar v Scotland	0-6
	Poland v Republic of Ireland	2-1

Group E

Oct 9 - London
England 2 (Walcott 45, Sterling 85)
Estonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,427. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
England: Hart - Clyne, Cahill, Smalling, Bertrand, Barkley (Alli 88), Milner, Lallana (Oxlade-Chamberlain 73), Walcott (Vardy 82), Kane, Sterling.
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Jaager, Klavan, Pikk, Kallaste (Luts 88), Dmitrijev (Lindpere 70), Mets, Zenjov, Purje (S Puri 70), Vassiljev.

Oct 9 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Birsa pen 45+1)
Lithuania 1 (Novikovas pen 79)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,498. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Struna, Ilic, Cesar, Jokic, Krhin, Kurtic, Birsa, Ilicic (Matavz 90), Lazarevic (Pecnik 73), Beric (Ljubijankic 62).
Lithuania: Zubas - Freidgeimas, Zaliukas (Mikuckis 90), Klimavicius, Slavickas, Cernych (D Cesnauskis 63), Panka, Zulpa, Novikovas, Spalvis, Slivka (Petravicius 69).

Oct 9 - St Gallen
Switzerland 7 (Lang 17, Inler pen 55, Mehmedi 65, Djourou pen 72, Kasami 75, Embolo pen 80, Derdiyok 89)
San Marino 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,200. **Ref:** Gestranius (Fin)
Switzerland: Burki - Lang, Schar, Djourou, Rodriguez (Moubandje 62), Zuffi, Inler, Kasami, Embolo, Drmic (Steffen 78), Mehmedi (Derdiyok 68).
San Marino: A Simoncini - Cesarini (F Vitaioli 78), Alessandro Della Valle, D Simoncini, Palazzi, Berardi, M Vitaioli, Tosi, L Gasperoni (Coppini 64), E Golinucci (Hirsch 83), Stefanelli.

Oct12 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Switzerland 1 (Klavan og 90+4)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,304. **Ref:** Van Boekel (Hol)
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Jaager, Klavan, Pikk, S Puri (Lindpere 67), Mets, Antonov, Kallaste (Luts 80), Zenjov (Purje 61), Vassiljev.
Switzerland: Hitz - Lang, Djourou, Lustenberger, Moubandje, Inler, Dzemaili, Xhaka (Kasami 80), Shaqiri (Embolo 46), Derdiyok, Mehmedi (Steffen 71).

Oct12 - Vilnius
Lithuania 0
England 3 (Barkley 29, Arlauskis og 35, Oxlade-Chamberlain 62)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 5,051. **Ref:** Hansen (Den)
Lithuania: Arlauskis - Freidgeimas, Mikuckis, Klimavicius, Andriuskevicius (Vaitkunas 82), Novikovas (Petravicius 63), Panka, Zulpa, Cernych, Slivka, Spalvis (Matulevicius 86).
England: Butland - Walker, Jones, Jagielka, Gibbs, Shelvey, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Lallana (Alli 67), Barkley (Townsend 73), Vardy, Kane (Ings 59).

Oct12 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Slovenia 2 (Cesar 54, Pecnik 75)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 781. **Ref:** Stavrev (Mac)
San Marino: A Simoncini - C Valentini (Alessandro Della Valle 73), Brolli, D Simoncini, Palazzi, Battistini, A Gasperoni, Chiaruzzi, M Vitaioli (Mazza 90), Hirsch, Selva (Rinaldi 71).
Slovenia: Oblak - Struna, Samardzic, Cesar, Jokic, Birsa, Krhin, Kurtic, Kirm (Lazarevic 70), Beric (Matavz 46), Ilicic (Pecnik 46).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP E – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (QF)	10	10	0	0	31	3	30
Switz'land (QF)	10	7	0	3	24	8	21
Slovenia (QP)	10	5	1	4	18	11	16
Estonia	10	3	1	6	4	9	10
Lithuania	10	3	1	6	7	18	10
San Marino	10	0	1	9	1	36	1

2014

Sep 8	Estonia v Slovenia	1-0
	San Marino v Lithuania	0-2
	Switzerland v England	0-2
Oct 9	England v San Marino	5-0
	Lithuania v Estonia	1-0
	Slovenia v Switzerland	1-0
Oct 12	Estonia v England	0-1
	Lithuania v Slovenia	0-2
Oct 14	San Marino v Switzerland	0-4
Nov 15	England v Slovenia	3-1
	San Marino v Estonia	0-0
	Switzerland v Lithuania	4-0

2015

Mar 27	England v Lithuania	4-0
	Slovenia v San Marino	6-0
	Switzerland v Estonia	3-0
Jun 14	Estonia v San Marino	2-0
	Lithuania v Switzerland	1-2
	Slovenia v England	2-3
Sep 5	Estonia v Lithuania	1-0
	San Marino v England	0-6
	Switzerland v Slovenia	3-2
Sep 8	England v Switzerland	2-0
	Lithuania v San Marino	2-1
	Slovenia v Estonia	1-0
Oct 9	England v Estonia	2-0
	Slovenia v Lithuania	1-1
	Switzerland v San Marino	7-0
Oct 12	Estonia v Switzerland	0-1
	Lithuania v England	0-3
	San Marino v Slovenia	0-2

Group F

Oct 8 - Budapest
Hungary 2 (Bode 63, 71)
Faroe Islands 1 (Jakobsen 11)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,500. **Ref:** Schorgenhofer (Aut)
Hungary: Kiraly - Fiola, Juhasz, Guzmics, Kadar, Bodi (Bode 46), Nagy, Gera, Tozser (Nemeth 46), Dzsudzsak, Nikolic (Priskin 75).
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, Nattestad (Faero 84), Gregersen, V Davidsen, R Joensen (Sorensen 78), Jakobsen (P Justinussen 62), Baldvinsson, Vatnhamar, Bartalsstovu, Edmundsson. *Sent off: Gregersen 90+4.*

Oct 8 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 3 (Davis 35, 58, Magennis 49)
Greece 1 (Aravidis 87)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,700. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Northern Ireland: McGovern - McNair (McCullough 85), McAuley, Cathcart, Brunt, Ward (McGinn 81), Norwood, C Evans, Davis, Dallas, Magennis (Boyce 78).
Greece: Karnezis - Torosidis, Moras, Papastathopoulos, Holebas, Samaris, Karelis (Mantalos 65), Tziolis, Kone (Pelkas 71), Aravidis, Mitroglou (Athanasiadis 76).

Oct 8 - Bucharest
Romania 1 (Hoban 90+1)
Finland 1 (Pohjanpalo 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,987. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Papp, Chiriches, D Grigore, Rat, Hoban, Torje (Popa 87), Sanmartean, Chipciu (Maxim 60), Stancu (Andone 69), Keseru.
Finland: Hradecky - Arkivuo (Jalasto 64), Arajuuri (Toivio 62), Moisander, Uronen, Ring, Halsti, Schuller, P Hetemaj, Pukki, Pohjanpalo (Hamalainen 77).

Oct11 - Torshavn
Faroe Islands 0
Romania 3 (Budescu 4, 45+1, Maxim 83)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,941. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, Faero, Nattestad (Baldvinsson 84), Sorensen, Holst (A Olsen 69), Hansson, Vatnhamar (Frederiksberg 69), Hendriksson, Bartalsstovu, Edmundsson.
Romania: Tatarusanu - Matel, Chiriches, D Grigore, Rat, Hoban, Popa, Budescu (Prepelita 88), Pintilii, Torje (Maxim 78), Stancu (Alibec 90).

Oct11 - Helsinki
Finland 1 (Arajuuri 87)
Northern Ireland 1 (Cathcart 31)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,550. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Finland: Hradecky - Jalasto, Arajuuri, J Ojala, Uronen, Ring (Lod 44), Mattila, Sparv, Schuller (Hamalainen 79), Pohjanpalo, Sadik (Pukki 66).
Northern Ireland: McGovern - McNair (C McLaughlin 51), McAuley, Cathcart, Brunt, Norwood, Baird, Davis, McGinn (Ferguson 71), K Lafferty (Magennis 79), Dallas.

Oct11 - Piraeus
Greece 4 (Stafylidis 5, Tachtsidis 57, Mitroglou 79, Kone 86)
Hungary 3 (Lovrencsics 26, Nemeth 55, 75)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 9,500. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Greece: Karnezis - Kitsiou, Papastathopoulos (Tzanetpoulos 64), Moras, Stafylidis (Holebas 35), Mantalos (Kone 72), Samaris, Fortounis, Tachtsidis, Pelkas, Mitroglou.
Hungary: Kiraly - Fiola, Juhasz, Kadar, Leandro, Lovrencsics (Nikolic 62), Gera (Nagy 71), Elek, Dzsudzsak (Kalmar 71), Bode, Nemeth.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP F – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Ireland (QF)	10	6	3	1	16	8	21
Romania (QF)	10	5	5	0	11	2	20
Hungary (QP)	10	4	4	2	11	9	16
Finland	10	3	3	4	9	10	12
Faroe Islands	10	2	0	8	6	17	6
Greece	10	1	3	6	7	14	6

2014

Sep 7	Faroe Islands v Finland	1-3
	Greece v Romania	0-1
	Hungary v Northern Ireland	1-2
Oct 11	Finland v Greece	1-1
	Northern Ireland v Faroe Islands	2-0
	Romania v Hungary	1-1
Oct 14	Faroe Islands v Hungary	0-1
	Finland v Romania	0-2
	Greece v Northern Ireland	0-2
Nov 14	Greece v Faroe Islands	0-1
	Hungary v Finland	1-0
	Romania v Northern Ireland	2-0

2015

Mar 29	Hungary v Greece	0-0
	Northern Ireland v Finland	2-1
	Romania v Faroe Islands	1-0
Jun 13	Faroe Islands v Greece	2-1
	Finland v Hungary	0-1
	Northern Ireland v Romania	0-0
Sep 4	Faroe Islands v Northern Ireland	1-3
	Greece v Finland	0-1
	Hungary v Romania	0-0
Sep 7	Finland v Faroe Islands	1-0
	Northern Ireland v Hungary	1-1
	Romania v Greece	0-0
Oct 8	Hungary v Faroe Islands	2-1
	Northern Ireland v Greece	3-1
	Romania v Finland	1-1
Oct 11	Faroe Islands v Romania	0-3
	Finland v Northern Ireland	1-1
	Greece v Hungary	4-3

Group G

Oct 9 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Sweden 2 (Berg 18, Ibrahimovic 55)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,740. **Ref:** Liany (Isr)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Rechsteiner, Frick, Wieser, Oehri, A Christen (N Kieber 83), Martin Buchel, Polverino (Gubser 59), Marcel Buchel, Burgmeier, Kuhne (Yildiz 72).
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig, Antonsson, Granqvist, M Olsson, Ekdal (Lewicki 66), Kallstrom, Durmaz (S Larsson 69), Ibrahimovic, Zengin, Berg (Guidetti 62).

Oct 9 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Cebotaru 85)
Russia 2 (Ignashevich 58, Dzyuba 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,244. **Ref:** Koukoulakis (Gre)
Moldova: Koselev - Jardan, Burghiu, Armas, Bordian, Cebotaru, Spataru, Carp (Vremea 70), Onica (Ambros 79), Antoniuc, Milinceanu (Istrati 88).
Russia: Akinfeev - Smolnikov (Kuzmin 27), A Berezutsky, Ignashevich, D Kombarov, Denisov, Mamaev, Shatov, Shirokov (Glushakov 76), Kokorin, Dzyuba (Smolov 88).

Oct 9 - Podgorica
Montenegro 2 (Vucinic 32, Beciraj 68)
Austria 3 (Janko 55, Arnautovic 81, Sabitzer 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,107. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Montenegro: Poleksic - Rodic, Savic, Simic, Tomasevic (Balic 74), N Vukcevic, Boljevic (Zverotic 56), Marusic, Mugosa (Mandic 64), Beciraj, Vucinic. *Sent off: Vucinic 87.*
Austria: Almer - Klein, Prodl, Dragovic, Fuchs, Harnik, Baumgartlinger, Alaba (Jantscher 82), Arnautovic, Junuzovic (Sabitzer 82), Janko (Okotie 82).

Oct12 - Vienna
Austria 3 (Arnautovic 12, Janko 54, 57)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 48,500. **Ref:** Zelinka (CzR)
Austria: Almer - Klein, Prodl, Dragovic, Fuchs, Baumgartlinger (Ilsanker 71), Alaba (Sabitzer 64), Harnik, Junuzovic, Arnautovic, Janko (Okotie 64).
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Rechsteiner, Frick (Kuhne 90), Kaufmann, Oehri (Brandle 46), N Kieber (Yildiz 62), Martin Buchel, Polverino, Wieser, Burgmeier, Marcel Buchel.

Oct12 - Moscow
Russia 2 (Kuzmin 33, Kokorin pen 37)
Montenegro 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 35,604. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Russia: Akinfeev - Kuzmin, A Berezutsky, Ignashevich, D Kombarov, Kokorin, Shirokov, Denisov, Dzagoev (Cheryshev 86), Shatov (Mamaev 69), Dzyuba (Smolov 84).
Montenegro: Mijatovic - Savic, Saveljich, Simic, Balic, Rodic (Marusic 67), Kascelan, Nikolic (Mugosa 46), N Vukcevic (Boljevic 85), Mandic, Beciraj.

Oct12 - Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Ibrahimovic 23, Zengin 47)
Moldova 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,351. **Ref:** Banti (Ita)
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig (Tinnerholm 83), Granqvist, Antonsson, M Olsson, S Larsson, Lewicki, Kallstrom (Svensson 57), Zengin, Ibrahimovic (Toivonen 57), Guidetti.
Moldova: Cebanu - Jardan (Spataru 80), Burghiu, Golovatenco, Erhan (Armas 63), Potirniche, Bordian, Vremea, Cebotaru, Patras (Antoniuc 61), Istrati.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP G – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria (QF)	10	9	1	0	22	5	28
Russia (QF)	10	6	2	2	21	5	20
Sweden (QP)	10	5	3	2	15	9	18
Montenegro	10	3	2	5	10	13	11
Liechtenstein	10	1	2	7	2	26	5
Moldova	10	0	2	8	4	16	2

2014

Sep 8	Austria v Sweden	1-1
	Montenegro v Moldova	2-0
	Russia v Liechtenstein	4-0
Oct 9	Liechtenstein v Montenegro	0-0
	Moldova v Austria	1-2
	Sweden v Russia	1-1
Oct 12	Austria v Montenegro	1-0
	Russia v Moldova	1-1
	Sweden v Liechtenstein	2-0
Nov 15	Austria v Russia	1-0
	Moldova v Liechtenstein	0-1
	Montenegro v Sweden	1-1

2015

Mar 27	Liechtenstein v Austria	0-5
	Moldova v Sweden	0-2
	Montenegro v Russia (awarded)	0-3
Jun 14	Liechtenstein v Moldova	1-1
	Russia v Austria	0-1
	Sweden v Montenegro	3-1
Sep 5	Austria v Moldova	1-0
	Montenegro v Liechtenstein	2-0
	Russia v Sweden	1-0
Sep 8	Liechtenstein v Russia	0-7
	Moldova v Montenegro	0-2
	Sweden v Austria	1-4
Oct 9	Liechtenstein v Sweden	0-2
	Moldova v Russia	1-2
	Montenegro v Austria	2-3
Oct 12	Austria v Liechtenstein	3-0
	Russia v Montenegro	2-0
	Sweden v Moldova	2-0

Group H

Oct10 - Baku
Azerbaijan 1 (Nazarov 31)
Italy 3 (Eder 11, El Shaarawy 43, Darmian 65)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Azerbaijan: K Agayev - Medvedev, B Huseynov, R F Sadygov, Dashdemirov, Qarayev, Ismayilov (Mirzabekov 90+1), Eddy (R A Sadygov 66), Amirguliyev, Nazarov, R Kurbanov (Erat 74). *Sent off: B Huseynov 88.*
Italy: Buffon - Darmian, Bonucci, Chiellini, De Sciglio, Candreva (Montolivo 88), Verratti, Parolo, El Shaarawy (Florenzi 74), Pelle, Eder (Giovinco 79).

Oct10 - Zagreb
Croatia 3 (Perisic 2, Rakitic 42, N Kalinic 81)
Bulgaria 0
HT: 2-0. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Dias (Por)
Croatia: Subasic - Srna, Corluka, Vida, Pivaric, Perisic, Modric (Badelj 46), Rakitic, Kovacic, Pjaca (Cop 60), N Kalinic (Kramaric 85). *Sent off: Cop 89.*
Bulgaria: Mitrev - S Popov, Terziev (Ivo Ivanov 46), A Aleksandrov, Z Milanov, Nedelev (G Milanov 46), Slavchev, Zlatinski, Tonev, I Popov (M Aleksandrov 71), Rangelov.

Oct10 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Tettey 19, Soderlund 52)
Malta 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,120. **Ref:** Hunter (NI)
Norway: Nyland - Elabdellaoui, Hovland, Forren, Aleesami, Skjelbred (Odegaard 53), Tettey, Johansen, Berget (Valon Berisha 84), Henriksen, Soderlund (King 77).
Malta: Hogg - S Borg (Camilleri 83), Z Muscat, A Muscat (Zerafa 56), Failla, P Fenech, R Muscat, Agius, Briffa, Effiong, Schembri (Kristensen 81).

Oct13 - Sofia
Bulgaria 2 (M Aleksandrov 20, Rangelov 56)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Bognar (Hun)
Bulgaria: Mitrev - Z Milanov, A Aleksandrov, Ivo Ivanov, Y Minev, G Milanov, Dyakov, Zlatinski, M Aleksandrov (Slavchev 80), I Popov (V Hristov 65), Rangelov (Nedelev 88).
Azerbaijan: K Agayev - Mirzabekov, Abishov, R F Sadygov, Medvedev (Dashdemirov 63), Ismayilov, Amirguliyev, Qarayev (Eddy 82), Nazarov, Jafarov (Erat 67), R Kurbanov.

Oct13 - Rome
Italy 2 (Florenzi 73, Pelle 82)
Norway 1 (Tettey 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Italy: Buffon - Barzagli (Candreva 72), Bonucci, Chiellini, Darmian, Florenzi, Montolivo (Bertolacci 68), Soriano, De Sciglio, Pelle, Eder (Giovinco 62).
Norway: Nyland - Elabdellaoui, Hovland, Forren, Aleesami, Johansen, Tettey, Skjelbred (Samuelsen 51), Henriksen, Berget (Valon Berisha 78), Soderlund (King 60).

Oct13 - Valletta
Malta 0
Croatia 1 (Perisic 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,835. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Malta: Hogg - Z Muscat, S Borg, Agius, Zerafa, R Muscat, Schembri (Cohen 90+2), Briffa (P Fenech 79), Kristensen, Failla, Effiong (M Mifsud 75).
Croatia: Subasic - Vida, Corluka, Srna, Badelj, N Kalinic (Kramaric 60), Kovacic, Pivaric, Rakitic (Brozovic 77), Perisic, Pjaca (Olic 83).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy (QF)	10	7	3	0	16	7	24
Croatia[1] (QF)	10	6	3	1	20	5	20
Norway (QP)	10	6	1	3	13	10	19
Bulgaria	10	3	2	5	9	12	11
Azerbaijan	10	1	3	6	7	18	6
Malta	10	0	2	8	3	16	2

[1] *1pt deducted after a swastika was painted on the pitch before the home game against Italy*

2014

Sep 9	Azerbaijan v Bulgaria	1-2
	Croatia v Malta	2-0
	Norway v Italy	0-2
Oct 10	Bulgaria v Croatia	0-1
	Italy v Azerbaijan	2-1
	Malta v Norway	0-3
Oct 13	Croatia v Azerbaijan	6-0
	Malta v Italy	0-1
	Norway v Bulgaria	2-1
Nov 16	Azerbaijan v Norway	0-1
	Bulgaria v Malta	1-1
	Italy v Croatia	1-1
2015		
Mar 28	Azerbaijan v Malta	2-0
	Bulgaria v Italy	2-2
	Croatia v Norway	5-1
Jun 12	Croatia v Italy	1-1
	Malta v Bulgaria	0-1
	Norway v Azerbaijan	0-0
Sep 3	Azerbaijan v Croatia	0-0
	Bulgaria v Norway	0-1
	Italy v Malta	1-0
Sep 6	Italy v Bulgaria	1-0
	Malta v Azerbaijan	2-2
	Norway v Croatia	2-0
Oct 10	Azerbaijan v Italy	1-3
	Croatia v Bulgaria	3-0
	Norway v Malta	2-0
Oct 13	Bulgaria v Azerbaijan	2-0
	Italy v Norway	2-1
	Malta v Croatia	0-1

Group I

Oct 8 - Elbasan
Albania 0
Serbia 2 (Kolarov 90+1, Ljajic 90+4)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,330. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Albania: Berisha - Hysaj, Cana, Djimsiti, Agolli, Memushaj, M Basha, Xhaka, Lila (Kace 46), Balaj (Cikalleshi 69), Lenjani (Meha 83).
Serbia: Stojkovic - Tomovic, Ivanovic (D Tosic 65), S Mitrovic, Kolarov, Milivojevic, Matic (Fejsa 73), Z Tosic, Ljajic, Tadic (Sulejmani 54), A Mitrovic.

Oct 8 - Braga
Portugal 1 (Joao Moutinho 66)
Denmark 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 29,860. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Cedric, Bruno Alves, Ricardo Carvalho, Fabio Coentrao, Joao Moutinho (Jose Fonte 90+1), Danilo Pereira, Tiago, Bernardo Silva (Danny 76), Cristiano Ronaldo, Nani (Quaresma 82).
Denmark: Schmeichel - Jacobsen, Kjaer, Agger, Durmisi, Wass (N Jorgensen 69), Hojbjerg (Kvist 46), Krohn-Dehli, Braithwaite, Bendtner, Eriksen (Y Poulsen 82).

Oct11 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Albania 3 (Hovhannisyan og 9, Djimsiti 23, Sadiku 76)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 4,700. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Armenia: Kasparov - Hovhannisyan, Arzumanyan, Haroyan, Andonian, Mkhitaryan, Yuspashyan (Ozbiliz 46), Pizzelli, Mkrtchyan, Ghazaryan (V Pogosyan 83), Movsisyan (Sarkisov 59).
Albania: Berisha - Aliji, Cana, Djimsiti, Hysaj, M Basha (Abrashi 87), Xhaka, Memushaj (Kukeli 72), Roshi, Cikalleshi (Sadiku 58), Gashi.

Oct11 - Belgrade
Serbia 1 (Z Tosic 65)
Portugal 2 (Nani 5, Joao Moutinho 78)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 7,485. **Ref:** Fernandez Borbalan (Spa)
Serbia: Stojkovic - Tomovic, S Mitrovic, D Tosic, Kolarov (Obradovic 77), Z Tosic (Sulejmani 84), Milivojevic, Ljajic, Matic, Tadic, A Mitrovic (Skuletic 85).
Sent off: Kolarov (from the bench) 80, Matic 81.
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Nelson Semedo, Jose Fonte, Bruno Alves (Luis Neto 46), Eliseu, Andre Andre, Danilo Pereira, Miguel Veloso (Joao Moutinho 70), Nani, Danny (Eder 57), Quaresma.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal (QF)	8	7	0	1	11	5	21
Albania (QF)	8	4	2	2	10	5	14
Denmark (QP)	8	3	3	2	8	5	12
Serbia[1]	8	2	1	5	8	13	4
Armenia	8	0	2	6	5	14	2

[1]3pts deducted for the fan violence that led to the abandonment of the home game against Albania

2014

Sep 7	Denmark v Armenia	2-1
	Portugal v Albania	0-1
Oct 11	Albania v Denmark	1-1
	Armenia v Serbia	1-1
Oct 14	Denmark v Portugal	0-1
	Serbia v Albania (awarded)	0-3
Nov 14	Portugal v Armenia	1-0
	Serbia v Denmark	1-3
2015		
Mar 29	Albania v Armenia	2-1
	Portugal v Serbia	2-1
Jun 13	Armenia v Portugal	2-3
	Denmark v Serbia	2-0
Sep 4	Denmark v Albania	0-0
	Serbia v Armenia	2-0
Sep 7	Albania v Portugal	0-1
	Armenia v Denmark	0-0
Oct 8	Albania v Serbia	0-2
	Portugal v Denmark	1-0
Oct 11	Armenia v Albania	0-3
	Serbia v Portugal	1-2

● *The top 2 in each group and the 3rd-placed team with the best record (Turkey; see table below) have qualified for the 24-team finals; the other 8 3rd-placed teams qualified for the play-offs. Hosts France qualify for the finals automatically*

3RD-PLACED TEAMS' RANKING[1] – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey (QF)	8	5	1	2	12	7	16
Hungary (QP)	8	4	3	1	8	5	15
Ukraine (QP)	8	4	1	3	11	4	13
Norway (QP)	8	4	1	3	8	10	13
Denmark (QP)	8	3	3	2	8	5	12
Sweden (QP)	8	3	3	2	11	9	12
R Ireland (QP)	8	3	3	2	8	7	12
Bosnia-H (QP)	8	3	2	3	11	12	11
Slovenia (QP)	8	3	1	4	10	11	10

[1]Determined by results against the teams finishing1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th in the respective qualifying groups

Play-offs draw

Bosnia-Herzegovina v Republic of Ireland
(1st leg - Nov 13; 2nd leg - Nov 16)
Norway v Hungary (Nov 12 & Nov 15)
Sweden v Denmark (Nov 14 & Nov 17)
Ukraine v Slovenia (Nov 14 & Nov 17)
● *Winners qualify for the finals*

2017 CONFEDERATIONS CUP

Qualifying play-off

(2013 Gold Cup winners, United States v 2015 Gold Cup winners, Mexico)
Oct10 - Pasadena
United States 2 (Cameron 15, Wood 108)
Mexico 3 (J Hernandez 10, Peralta 96, Aguilar 118)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 93,723.
Ref: Aguilar (ESv)
United States: Guzan - F Johnson (Evans 111), Cameron, Besler, Beasley, Beckerman, Jones, Bradley, Zardes (Yedlin 78), Dempsey, Altidore (Wood 98).
Mexico: Munoz - Aguilar, Moreno, Reyes, Layun, Guardado (Guemez 80), Marquez (Rivas 76), H Herrera, R Jimenez, J Hernandez (J M Corona 97), Peralta.

● *Mexico will represent CONCACAF at the 2017 Confederations Cup in Russia*

FRIENDLIES

Wednesday, September 30

Sep 30 - Gaborone
Botswana 2 (Mogorosi 44, 67)
Ethiopia 3 (Dawit Fekadu 5, Seyoum 41, 47)
HT: 1-2

Friday, October 2

Oct 2 - Muscat
Oman 2 (Q Said 42, Mubarak pen 75)
Syria 1 (Al Jafal 90)
HT: 1-0

Saturday, October 3

Oct 3 - Amman
Jordan 3 (Al Dardour 65, 78, Saeed og 80)
Iraq 0
HT: 0-0

Thursday, October 8

Oct 8 - San Jose
Costa Rica 0
South Africa 1 (Jali 9)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Penaloza (Mex)
Costa Rica: Navas - Acosta, Calvo (Aguilar 55), Borges, Duarte, Venegas (Colindres 61), Campbell (Vega 84), Oviedo, Gamboa, Tejeda (Guzman 73), Urena (Matarrita 90).
South Africa: Khune - Ngcongca, Coetzee, Mathoho, Lebusa (Mashaba 59), Jali, Zungu, Masango, Serero (Patosi 87), Lebese (Hlatshwayo 78), Vilakazi (Mokotjo 70).

Oct 8 - Nice
France 4 (Griezmann 35, Cabaye 55, Benzema 78, 79)
Armenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,136. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
France: Lloris - Sagna, Varane, Sakho, Evra, Cabaye (Sissoko 77), L Diarra, Matuidi (Schneiderlin 63), Griezmann (Lacazette 88), Benzema (Giroud 81), Valbuena (Martial 63).
Armenia: Kasparov - Hambardzumyan (Manoyan 70), T Voskanyan, Andonian, Hayrapetyan, Hovhannisyan (V Pogosyan 61), Yuspashyan, Mkhitaryan (Pizzelli 61), Mkrtchyan (Grigoryan 80), Ghazaryan (Aslanyan 67), Sarkisov (Ozbiliz 54).

Oct 8 - Tegucigalpa
Honduras 1 (Bengtson 3)
Guatemala 1 (Tinoco 50)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Hnd)
Honduras: Valladares - Beckeles (Crisanto 78), Johnny Palacios, M Figueroa, Oseguera, O Garcia (Tejeda 70), Morazan, A Mejia (Mendez 59), Discua (M Martinez 59), Andino, Bengtson (Castillo 70).
Guatemala: P Motta - Vasquez, Lalin, Tinoco (Guerra 63), Hernandez, Lopez (Gallardo 64), De Leon, Cincotta (Archila 80; Herrarte 86), Contreras (Rodas 63), Thompson, C Ruiz (Castellanos 46).

Oct 8 - Bangkok, Thailand
Laos 1 (Khanthavong pen 82)
Malaysia 3 (Christie 50, 90+2, Azamuddin 53)
HT: 0-0

Oct 8 - Vise, Belgium
Nigeria 0
DR Congo 2 (Mbokani 5, Nkololo 31)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 700. **Ref:** Gumienny (Blg)
Nigeria: Ikeme - Echiejile, Troost-Ekong, Balogun, Abdullahi, Mikel, Onazi (Ndidi 83), Ibrahim (Emenike 46), Igbonu (Simon 46), Musa (Iwobi 56), Ighalo (Obiora 65).
DR Congo: Mandanda - Oualembo, Mongongu, Mbemba, Nsakala, Mulumba, Maghoma (Bokila 80), Bolasie (Mubele 89), Mabwati (Botaka 73), Nkololo (Kamavuaka 66), Mbokani (Kabananga 82).

Oct 8 - Panama City
Panama 1 (Pimentel 60)
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (K Jones 34, Abu Bakr 51)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Matamoros (Hnd)
Panama: Penedo (Mejia 46) - Cooper (Parris 46), Baloy, Machado, Davis (L Henriquez 62), Gomez, Godoy (Addles 62), Pimentel, Quintero, Nurse (G Torres 79), Tejada (Blackburn 62).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Bateau (Cyrus 55), Abu Bakr, Hoyte (David 69), M Williams, J Jones (Hackshaw 78), Hyland, Boucaud (George 65), Cummings, Glenn (Caesar 46), K Jones (Plaza 80).

Friday, October 9

Oct 9 - Algiers
Algeria 1 (Slimani 2)
Guinea 2 (A Bangoura 16, 39)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Hussein (Sud)
Algeria: Doukha - Hachoud, Tahrat (Belkaroui 63), Medjani, Ghoulam, Feghouli, Abeid (Mesloub 46), Taider, Mahrez, Soudani (Bounedjah 80), Slimani (Brahimi 61).
Sent off: Ghoulam 90+6.
Guinea: N Yattara - F Camara, Diop, Issiaga Sylla, Conde (S Keita 46), Constant (Sorry 89), Idrissa Sylla, N Keita (Diarra 82), A Bangoura (Diallo 61), Conte (L Camara 71), Sankoh.

Oct 9 - Troyes, France
Burkina Faso 1 (Bance 21)
Mali 4 (Sako 7, pen 18, Maiga 52, Wague 67)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 1,514. **Ref:** Ennjimi (Fra)

Oct 9 - Houston, USA
El Salvador 1 (Punyed 37)
Haiti 3 (Marcelin 14, Printemps 18, Maurice 21)
HT: 1-3. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
El Salvador: H Hernandez - Garcia, Mendoza, Molina, Larin, D Ceren (N Orellana 85), Menjivar (Renderos 46), Alvarez (Herrera 85), Jaime Alas (A Flores 74), Punyed (Pena 58), N Bonilla.
Haiti: Placide - Christian, Jerome, Aveska, Alcenat, Alexandre (Constant 74), Millien, Marcelin, Printemps (Thuriere 46), Nazon (Belfort 72), Maurice (Jean-Baptiste 61).

Oct 9 - Agadir
Morocco 0
Ivory Coast 1 (Doumbia 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Essrayri (Tun)
Morocco: Munir - Chafik, El Adoua, Feddal, Lazaar, Obbadi (Moutouali 74), El Ahmadi (Saadane 86), Dirar, Ziyech (Belhanda 66), Barrada (El Kaddouri 62), El Arabi (Hamdallah 66).
Ivory Coast: Gbohouo - Bagayoko, L Kone (Deli 46), Bailly (Viera 52), Djakpa (Aurier 70), Serey Die, Diomande (Doumbia 46), Serri, Kalou (Cyriac 86), Sio (Akpa Akpro 46), Gervinho.

Oct 9 - Taipei
Taiwan 5 (Wen Chih-hao 22, Chen Hao-wei 42, 71, Xavier Chen 61, Chu En-le 68)
Macau 1 (Lam Ka Seng 17)
HT: 2-1

Oct 9 - Bangkok
Thailand 1 (Theerathon pen 90+2)
Hong Kong 0
HT: 0-0

Oct 9 - Rades
Tunisia 3 (Khenissi 3, Camus 35, Khazri 50)
Gabon 3 (Aubameyang pen 33, Lemina 63, Kanga 86)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Jedidi (Tun)
Tunisia: A Mathlouthi (Ben Mustapha 57) - H Mathlouthi, S Ben Youssef, Jemal, Maaloul, Meriah, Sassi, Khazri (Ouedherfi 82), Msakni (Khalifa 67), Khenissi (Yahia 54), Camus (Lahmar 67).
Gabon: Ovono - Palun, Ecuele Manga, Appindangoye, Ze Ondo, Lemina (Mbingui 78), Biyogo Poko (Tandjigora 46), Kanga, Aubameyang, Evouna (Lengoualama 82), Bulot (Madinda 46).

Saturday, October 10

Oct10 - Pristina
Kosovo 2 (Brahimi 2, 47)
Equatorial Guinea 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Jorgji (Alb)
Kosovo: Ujkani - Pacarada (Markaj 56), I Berisha (Jashanica 84), Sadiku, Perdedaj (Abazi 84), Halimi, Zejnullahu, Bunjaku, Brahimi (Sulejmani 56), B Berisha (Hasani 56), Fejzullahu (Krasniqi 64).
Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Igor Engonga, Rui, Mbele, Randy (Eloy 62), Raul Fabiani (Maquina 46), Boriba (Evuy 62), Kike (Doualla 46), Sisinio, Josete (Lolin 78), Ivan Zarandona (Deco 85).
Sent off: Mbele 38.

Sunday, October 11

Oct11 - Copenhagen
Denmark 1 (Sviatchenko 90+1)
France 2 (Giroud 4, 6)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Jacobsen, Kjaer (Sviatchenko 73), Agger (Vestergard 86), Durmisi, Kvist, J Poulsen (Hojbjerg 46), Braithwaite (Sisto 70), Eriksen (Y Poulsen 61), Krohn-Dehli (N Jorgensen 56), Bendtner.
France: Mandanda - Jallet, Varane (Zouma 46), Mangala, Digne, Sissoko, Schneiderlin, Matuidi, Griezmann (Valbuena 78), Giroud (Lacazette 73), Martial (Cabaye 88).

Oct11 - Abu Dhabi, UAE
Egypt 3 (Koka 3, 48, Gamal 90+4)
Zambia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Al Zarouni (UAE)
Egypt: El Shenawy - Gaber, Rabia, Hegazy, Abdel-Shafy, El Nenny, Hamed (Zakaria 46), Kahraba (Warda 46), M Salah (Mekky 82), Koka (El Said 64), Morsi (Gamal 46).
Zambia: Mweene - Chepeshi, Mkandawire, S Sunzu, Mfune, Chirwa, Sinkala, Lungu (Musekwa 59), Musonda (Malama 59), Mbesuma (Mbewe 86), Kalengo.

Oct11 - Brussels, Belgium
Nigeria 3 (Ambrose 38, Simon 61, Ighalo 88)
Cameroon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Lardot (Blg)
Nigeria: Ikeme - Abdullahi, Balogun (Obaroakpo 90), Ambrose, Echiejile, Onazi, Mikel (Ndidi 62), Igbonu (Ibrahim 71), Simon, Emenike (Ighalo 74), Musa (Iwobi 79).
Cameroon: Ondoa (N'Dy Assembe 70) - Bassong (Fai 67), Chedjou, N'Koulou, Kombi Mandjang, Siani, Moukandjo, Mbia, Aboubakar, N'Jie, Kweuke (Salli 46). *Sent off: Mbia 47.*

Monday, October 12

Oct12 - Vise, Belgium
Gabon 1 (Madinda 51)
DR Congo 2 (Botaka 6, Mbemba 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,850. **Ref:** Gumienny (Blg)
Gabon: Ovono - Palun (Oto'o 46), Appindangoye, H Ndong, Obiang, Tandjigora, Lemina (Mbingui 76), Kanga, Madinda (Biyogo Poko 81), Lengoualama (Bulot 62), Aubameyang.
DR Congo: Kiassumbua (Nkela 72) - Oualembo, Mbemba, Mongongu, Nsakala, Mulumba, Maghoma (Zakuani 62), Nkololo (Kebano 43), Botaka (Mubele 77), Kabananga (Mbokani 62), Bolasie.

Oct12 - Agadir
Morocco 1 (El Kaddouri pen 23)
Guinea 1 (M Yattara 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)
Morocco: Bounou - Chafik, El Adoua, Feddal, Lazaar (Achenteh 82), Obbadi, El Ahmadi, Ziyech (Belhanda 63), El Kaddouri, Barrada (Iajour 52), Chahechouhe (Hamdallah 69).
Guinea: A Keita - Bamba, F Camara (Conte 58), L Camara (Idrissa Sylla 90+3), Conde, Ibrahima Bangoura (Issiaga Sylla 58), Diarra, Diop, N Keita (Sankoh 69), A Diallo (S Keita 63), M Yattara (A Bangoura 79).

Tuesday, October 13

Oct13 - Algiers
Algeria 1 (Brahimi 80)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Mamane (Ngr)
Algeria: Doukha - Ziti, Medjani, Belkaroui (Tahrat 46), Bedbouda, Feghouli (Benrahma 70), Mesloub, Taider, Mahrez, Brahimi, Bounedjah (Soudani 70).
Senegal: Diallo - Gassama, Mbodj, Koulibaly, Ciss, Gueye, Kouyate (Sankhare 65), Saivet (C N'Doye 71), S Mane, Niasse (Konate 78), Sakho.

Oct13 - Washington DC, USA
Canada 1 (De Jong 28)
Ghana 1 (Adomah 44)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,300. **Ref:** Penso (USA)
Canada: Stamatopoulos - Ouimette (Aird 46), Lefevre, Hainault, De Jong (Adekugbe 53), Straith, Froese, Trafford (Bustos 71), M Haber (Cavallini 46), Ricketts (Jackson 81), Hoilett (Tissot 88).
Ghana: Brimah - Afful (Ofosu-Ayeh 68), Boye, Schlupp, Gyimah, Bernard Mensah (Waris 60), Agyemang-Badu, Wakaso (Acquah 67), Accam, Adomah (Sam 68), J Ayew (Poku 82).

Oct13 - Brazzaville
Congo 2 (Bifouma 20, 89)
Benin 1 (Bessan 78)
HT: 1-0

Oct13 - Carson, USA
Guatemala 1 (Pappa 30)
El Salvador 1 (Castro 68)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
Guatemala 4-2 on pens[1]
Guatemala: P Motta - Lalin, Vasquez, Gallardo, Mejia, Thompson, De Leon (Arias 73), Hernandez (Herrarte 71), Pappa (Contreras 36), C Ruiz (L Martinez 55), Tinoco (Castellanos 75).
El Salvador: Contreras - Castro, Molina, Romero, Larin, Alvarez (Punyed 81), Menjivar, D Ceren, Jaime Alas (N Bonilla 87), A Flores, Rugamas (Pena 46).
[1]*This game was for the Copa Delta*

Oct13 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 1 (Andino 13)
South Africa 1 (Mathoho 8)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)
Honduras: Valladares - Crisanto, Velasquez, M Figueroa, Oseguera (Alvarado 60), A Mejia (Garrido 46), Morazan (O Garcia 60), M Martinez, Andino (Tejeda 70), Discua, Castillo (Bengtson 70).
South Africa: Khune - Ngcongca, Coetzee, Mathoho, Lebusa (Daniels 16), Jali, Mokotjo (Furman 70), Masango, Serero (Vilakazi 24; Nhlapho 87), Shongwe (Lebese 56), Patosi (Zungu 65).

Oct13 - Tehran
Iran 1 (Torabi 45)
Japan 1 (Muto 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Abdul Baki (Oma)
Iran: A Haghighi - Rezaeian, Montazeri, Ghafouri (Torabi 24), Hosseini, O Ebrahimi, Amiri, Ezatolahi (Pouraliganji 63), Dejagah (Teymourian 90), Hajsafi, Azmoun (Taremi 83).
Japan: Nishikawa - Morishige, Yoshida, Yonekura, G Sakai (Niwa 75), Hasebe, Kagawa (Kiyotake 46), Shibasaki (Kashiwagi 71), Honda (Okazaki 65), Usami (Haraguchi 59), Muto (Minamino 87).

Oct13 - Toluca
Mexico 1 (Vela 44)
Panama 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Moncada (Hnd)
Mexico: Talavera - I Jimenez, M Herrera, Rivas, Torres Nilo, Esquivel (Layun 79), Guemez, J Dos Santos (H Herrera 46), Aquino (E Hernandez 60), Vela, R Jimenez (J M Corona 60).
Panama: Penedo (Calderon 46) - Parris (Miller 52), Baloy, L Henriquez, Machado, Godoy (Blackburn 57), Quintero (Addles 72), Pimentel, Cooper, Gomez, Nurse (Tejada 61).

Oct13 - Seoul
South Korea 3 (Ji Dong-won 35, Ki Sung-yueng pen 57, Hwang Ui-jo 63)
Jamaica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 29,105. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
South Korea: Jung Sung-ryong - Kim Jin-su (Park Joo-ho 85), Kim Kee-hee, Hong Jeong-ho (Kwak Tae-hwi 57), Kim Chang-soo, Jung Woo-young (Jang Hyun-soo 85), Han Kook-young, Ji Dong-won (Kwon Chang-hoon 77), Ki Sung-yueng (Nam Tae-hee 88), Lee Jae-sung (Koo Ja-cheol 69), Hwang Ui-jo.
Jamaica: Blake - Cummings, U Edwards, Harriott (Woozencroft 72), Laing, Dawkins (Ottey 89), D Brown (Grant 46), Mariappa, Stevens (Morris 78), Mattocks (Seaton 86), Barnes.

Oct13 - Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 0
Nicaragua 0
Att: 5,500. **Ref:** Yorke (T&T)
Trinidad & Tobago: J-M Williams - Cyrus, Marshall (Abu Bakr 57), Bateau, David (M Williams 68), K George, Hyland, Caesar (A Andrews 78), Cummings (Boucaud 67), J Jones, K Jones (Glenn 73).
Nicaragua: Lorente - Quijana, O Lopez, Copete (Silva 81), Rosas, Peralta, M Lopez (Coronel 86), Chavarria (Membreno 90), Barrera, Pinel (B Garcia 68), Leguias (Pavon 77).

Oct13 - Harrison
United States 0
Costa Rica 1 (Campbell 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,214. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)
United States: Howard - Evans, Cameron (Alvarado 46), Orozco, Ream (Spector 63), Yedlin, Jones (Diskerud 46), Williams, Shea (Nguyen 72), Zardes (Wooten 72), Altidore (Wood 46).
Costa Rica: Navas - Acosta, Waston, Oviedo (Matarrita 54), Duarte (Calvo 87), Gamboa (Myrie 67), Venegas (Colindres 76), Borges (Granados 90+1), Guzman, Urena, Campbell.

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

Group A

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Togo	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Liberia	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Tunisia	2	1	0	1	8	2	3
Djibouti	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Group B

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Cent Af Rep	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
DR Congo	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Madagascar	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group C

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
South Sudan	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Benin	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Equat Guinea	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group D

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Botswana	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Burkina Faso	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Comoros	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group E

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Zambia	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Kenya	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Guinea-Bissau	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Group F

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cape Verde	2	2	0	0	9	2	6
Morocco	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Libya	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Sao Tome	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Group G

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Tanzania	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Chad	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

Group H

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Rwanda	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Mauritius	2	1	0	1	2	7	3
Mozambique	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group I

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sudan	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Ivory Coast	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Group J

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Ethiopia	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Seychelles	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Lesotho	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Group K

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Burundi	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Niger	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Namibia	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group L

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swaziland	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Zimbabwe	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Malawi	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
Guinea	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

Group M

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP M

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Mauritania	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Gambia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
South Africa	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Remaining matchdays
2016 – Mar 23-26; Mar 26-29; Jun 3-5; Sep 2-4

● *The13 group winners and the 2 runners-up with the best record (excluding 3-team Group I) will qualify for the16-team finals. Hosts Gabon qualify automatically*

Club football

CONCACAF

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
Aug 4: Santos Laguna (Mex) 4 W Connection (T&T) 0.
Aug 20: Saprissa (CR) 4 W Connection 0.
Aug 25: Saprissa 2 Santos Laguna 1.
Sep 16: W Connection 2 Saprissa 1.
Sep 22: W Connection 0 Santos Laguna 1.
Oct 20: Santos Laguna 6 Saprissa 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos (Q)	4	3	0	1	12	3	9
Saprissa	4	2	0	2	8	9	6
W Connection	4	1	0	3	2	10	3

Group B
Aug 6: Herediano (CR) 3 Isidro Metapan (ESv) 0.
Aug 18: Tigres (Mex) 2 Isidro Metapan 1.
Aug 26: Herediano 1 Tigres 1.
Sep 17: Isidro Metapan 2 Herediano 0.
Sep 24: Isidro Metapan 1 Tigres 2.
Oct 21: Tigres 0 Herediano 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tigres (Q)	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Herediano	4	1	2	1	4	3	5
Isidro Metapan	4	1	0	3	4	7	3

Group C
Aug 4: Queretaro (Mex) 2 San Francisco (Pan) 0.
Aug 18: Verdes (Blz) 0 Queretaro 0.
Aug 26: San Francisco 2 Queretaro 1.
Sep 17: Queretaro 8 Verdes 0.
Sep 22: Verdes 2 San Francisco 1.
Oct 22: San Francisco 8 Verdes 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Queretaro (Q)	4	2	1	1	11	2	7
San Francisco	4	2	0	2	11	5	6
Verdes	4	1	1	2	2	17	4

Group D
Aug 6: Los Angeles Galaxy (USA) 5 Central (T&T) 1.
Aug 18: Los Angeles Galaxy 5 Comunicaciones (Gtm) 0.
Aug 27: Comunicaciones 1 Central 0.
Sep 17: Central 1 Comunicaciones 0.
Sep 23: Central 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1.
Oct 21: Comunicaciones 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LA Galaxy (Q)	4	2	2	0	12	3	8
Central	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Comunicac'es	4	1	1	2	2	7	4

Group E
Aug 5: America (Mex) 4 Motagua (Hnd) 0.
Aug 19: America 1 Walter Ferretti (Nic) 0.
Aug 27: Motagua 2 Walter Ferretti 0.
Sep 16: Walter Ferretti 1 America 3.
Sep 24: Walter Ferretti 1 Motagua 2.
Oct 20: Motagua 1 America 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America (Q)	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Motagua	4	2	1	1	5	6	7
Walter Ferretti	4	0	0	4	2	8	0

Group F

Aug 5: Vancouver Whitecaps (Can) 1 Seattle Sounders (USA) 1.
Aug 19: Seattle Sounders 2 Olimpia (Hnd) 1.
Aug 26: Olimpia 1 Seattle Sounders 0.
Sep 16: Vancouver Whitecaps 1 Olimpia 0.
Sep 23: Seattle Sounders 3 Vancouver Whitecaps 0.
Oct 22: Olimpia 1 Vancouver Whitecaps 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP F – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Seattle S (Q)	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Olimpia	4	2	0	2	3	3	6
V Whitecaps	4	1	1	2	2	5	4

Group G

Aug 4: Municipal (Gtm) 0 Real Salt Lake (USA) 1.
Aug 20: Santa Tecla (ESv) 1 Municipal 1.
Aug 25: Municipal 2 Santa Tecla 1.
Sep 15: Santa Tecla 0 Real Salt Lake 0.
Sep 24: Real Salt Lake 2 Santa Tecla 1.
Oct 20: Real Salt Lake 1 Municipal 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP G – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
R Salt Lake (Q)	4	3	1	0	4	1	10
Municipal	4	1	1	2	3	4	4
Santa Tecla	4	0	2	2	3	5	2

Group H

Aug 5: Arabe Unido (Pan) 3 Montego Bay United (Jam) 0.
Aug 19: Arabe Unido 0 DC United (USA) 1.
Aug 25: DC United 3 Montego Bay United 0.
Sep 15: DC United 2 Arabe Unido 0.
Sep 22: Montego Bay United 3 DC United 3.
Oct 22: Montego Bay United 1 Arabe Unido 2.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DC United (Q)	4	3	1	0	9	3	10
Arabe Unido	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Montego Bay	4	0	1	3	4	11	1

● *Group winners qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals draw

Los Angeles Galaxy v Santos Laguna
Queretaro v DC United
Seattle Sounders v America
Tigres v Real Salt Lake
1st legs - Feb 23-25; 2nd legs - Mar1-3, 2016

CURACAO

2015 Championship Final

Oct 25
Centro Dominguito 4 Centro Barber 2

GRENADA

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hurricane (C)	18	11	5	2	33	12	38
Paradise	18	12	1	5	38	18	37
Boca Juniors	18	11	2	5	33	20	35
St John's	18	9	4	5	25	20	31
QPR	18	9	2	7	38	26	29
Chantimelle	18	9	2	7	31	30	29
Hard Rock	18	5	4	9	27	26	19
Fontenoy Utd[1]	18	6	1	11	22	38	19
Gr'da Boys (R)	18	5	3	10	17	28	18
Hampshire (R)	18	1	0	17	8	54	3

[1]*Enter rel/prom play-off*

EUROPE

FAROE ISLANDS

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B36 (C)	27	18	7	2	60	25	61
NSI	27	16	6	5	73	37	54
Vikingur	27	15	8	4	68	35	53
HB	27	11	10	6	43	31	43
KI	27	11	8	8	50	41	41
IF	27	5	12	10	44	56	27
TB	27	4	14	9	36	47	26
AB	27	4	12	11	34	42	24
Suduroy (R)	27	6	4	17	39	68	22
EB/Str'mur (R)	27	2	5	20	27	92	11

ICELAND

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FH (C)	22	15	3	4	47	26	48
Breidablik	22	13	7	2	34	13	46
KR	22	12	6	4	36	21	42
Stjarnan	22	9	6	7	32	24	33
Valur	22	9	6	7	38	31	33
Fjolnir	22	9	6	7	36	35	33
IA	22	7	8	7	31	31	29
Fylkir	22	7	8	7	26	31	29
Vikingur R'vik	22	5	8	9	32	36	23
IBV	22	5	4	13	26	37	19
Leiknir (R)	22	3	6	13	20	34	15
Keflavik (R)	22	2	4	16	22	61	10

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

3rd round

1st legs - Sep 22-24; 2nd legs - Sep 29-Oct1
Atletico Paranaense (Bra) v Brasilia (Bra)
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
Emelec (Ecu) v Santa Fe (Col)
2-1, 0-1 (agg 2-2, Santa Fe on away goals)
Independiente (Arg) v Olimpia (Par)
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
Lanus (Arg) v Defensor Sporting (Uru)
0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, Defensor 5-3 on pens)
Libertad (Par) v Chapecoense (Bra)
1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2, Chapecoense 5-3 on pens)
River Plate (Arg) v LDU Quito (Ecu)
2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)
Sport Recife (Bra) v Huracan (Arg)
1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4)
Tolima (Col) v Sportivo Luqueno (Par)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)

AFRICA

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs - Sep 26/27; 2nd legs - Oct 3/4
Al Hilal (Sud) v USM Alger (Alg)
1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2)
Al Merreikh (Sud) v TP Mazembe (DRC)
2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4)

CONFEDERATION CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - Sep 26/27; 2nd legs - Oct 3/4
Etoile Sahel (Tun) v Zamalek (Egy)
5-1, 0-3 (agg 5-4)
Orlando Pirates (SAf) v Al Ahly (Egy)
1-0, 4-3 (agg 5-3)

ANGOLA

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rec Libolo (C)	30	16	12	2	44	20	60
Prim'o Agosto	30	17	9	4	51	23	60
Benfica Luanda	30	14	11	5	35	23	53
Kabuscorp	30	11	15	4	32	23	48
Interclube	30	11	12	7	34	24	45
Progresso LS	30	10	10	10	31	31	40
D'vo Huila	30	10	9	11	24	33	39
Petro Atletico	30	10	8	12	25	29	38
AS Aviacao	30	10	8	12	31	39	38
S Esperanca	30	9	10	11	22	28	37
Rec Caala	30	7	15	8	28	25	36
Progresso S'ga	30	9	8	13	35	38	35
Academica	30	9	6	15	34	36	33
Bravos M (R)	30	8	7	15	28	40	31
S Cabinda (R)	30	7	10	13	31	46	31
Domant (R)	30	5	4	21	28	55	19

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

2015 – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Micomeseng (C)	6	3	2	1	6	4	11
S Ela Nguema	6	2	3	1	5	2	9
Dep Mongomo	6	1	5	0	4	3	8
Dep Unidad[1]	5	1	3	1	3	3	6
Akonangui[1]	5	1	2	2	2	5	5
Leones Veg	6	0	3	3	4	7	3

[1]*Did not play final game*

LIBERIA

2015 Championship Final

1st leg - Sep 20; 2nd leg - Sep 27
LISCR v Nimba United 0-0, 0-0
(agg 0-0, Nimba United 3-2 on pens)

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs - Sep 29/30; 2nd legs - Oct 20/21
Al Hilal (Sau) v Al Ahli (UAE)
1-1, 2-3 (agg 3-4)
Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) v Gamba Osaka (Jap)
2-1, 0-0 (agg 2-1)

AFC CUP

Semi-finals

Kuwait SC (Kuw) v Istiklol (Taj) &
Qadsia SC (Kuw) v Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mly)
The Kuwaiti teams were expelled following FIFA's suspension of Kuwait's FA because of government interference in the running of the body. The ruling came after the1st legs had been played – a 4-0 win to Kuwait SC and a 3-1 win to Qadsia SC. Both results were annulled and Istiklol and Johor Darul Ta'zim were given walkovers

AFGHANISTAN

2015 Championship Final

Oct 2
Shaheen Asmayee 0 De Spin Ghar Bazan 0
(aet, De Spin Ghar Bazan 4-3 on pens)

LAOS

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lao Toyota (C)	20	15	3	2	63	21	48
Lanexang	20	15	3	2	67	16	48
SHB Vientiane	20	13	5	2	50	23	44
Lao Police	20	8	6	6	39	33	30
HA Attapeu	20	7	5	8	43	46	26
Eastern Star	20	7	5	8	33	35	26
Champasak	20	8	1	11	32	31	25
EDL	20	5	9	6	30	41	24
Savan	20	6	2	12	30	43	20
Y Elephant	20	3	4	13	18	46	13
Ezra	20	1	1	18	15	85	4

MONGOLIA

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Erchim (C)	16	12	1	3	62	15	37
FC Ulaanba'tar	16	11	0	5	40	24	33
Selenge Press	16	10	2	4	40	19	32
Khoromkhon	16	9	2	5	50	28	29
Khangarid	16	9	1	6	46	26	28
Ulaanb'r Univ	16	8	2	6	49	30	26
Deren	16	2	3	11	24	56	9
Mazaalaynuud	16	2	2	12	20	60	8
Soembiin B	16	2	1	13	9	82	7

NEPAL

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Three Star (C)	16	10	5	1	32	9	35
Nepal Army	16	9	6	1	38	6	33
Manang M'gdi	16	9	4	3	29	9	31
Jhapa XI	16	8	3	5	23	13	27
Armed Police	16	7	2	7	29	25	23
Far Western	16	5	5	6	26	33	20
Nepal Police	16	3	4	9	14	29	13
J'ba Lumbini	16	2	2	12	10	43	8
Morang	16	0	7	9	10	44	7

OCEANIA

VANUATU

2015 Championship (National Super League) Final

Sep 26
Amicale 3 Malampa Revivors 0

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QF) = qualified for finals
(QP) = qualified for play-offs

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PREMIER LEAGUE

ARSENAL

GOALKEEPERS
33 Petr **CECH** (CzR) (33) 20.05.82
49 Matt **MACEY** (21) 09.09.94
13 David **OSPINA** (Col) (27) 31.08.88

DEFENDERS
24 Hector **BELLERIN** (Spa) (20) 19.03.95
21 Calum **CHAMBERS** (20) 20.01.95
2 Mathieu **DEBUCHY** (Fra) (30) 28.07.85
5 **GABRIEL** (Bra) (24) 26.11.90
3 Kieran **GIBBS** (26) 26.09.89
6 Laurent **KOSCIELNY** (Fra) (30) 10.09.85
4 Per **MERTESACKER** (Ger) (31) 29.09.84
18 Nacho **MONREAL** (Spa) (29) 26.02.86

MIDFIELDERS
8 Mikel **ARTETA** (Spa) (33) 26.03.82
19 Santi **CAZORLA** (Spa) (30) 13.12.84
34 Francis **COQUELIN** (Fra) (24) 13.05.91
20 Mathieu **FLAMINI** (Fra) (31) 07.03.84
15 Alex **OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN** (22) 15.08.93
11 Mesut **OZIL** (Ger) (27) 15.10.88
16 Aaron **RAMSEY** (Wal) (24) 26.12.90
7 Tomas **ROSICKY** (CzR) (35) 04.10.80
10 Jack **WILSHERE** (23) 01.01.92

FORWARDS
28 Joel **CAMPBELL** (CR) (23) 26.06.92
12 Olivier **GIROUD** (Fra) (29) 30.09.86
17 Alexis **SANCHEZ** (Chl) (26) 19.12.88
14 Theo **WALCOTT** (26) 16.03.89
23 Danny **WELBECK** (24) 26.11.90

MANAGER
Arsene **WENGER** (Fra) (66) 22.10.49

ASTON VILLA

GOALKEEPERS
31 Mark **BUNN** (30) 16.11.84
1 Brad **GUZAN** (USA) (31) 09.09.84

DEFENDERS
23 Jordan **AMAVI** (Fra) (21) 09.03.94
6 Ciaran **CLARK** (RoI) (26) 26.09.89
33 Jose Angel **CRESPO** (Spa) (28) 09.02.87
21 Alan **HUTTON** (Sco) (30) 30.11.84
2 Tiago **ILORI** (Por) (22) 26.02.93
16 Joleon **LESCOTT** (33) 16.08.82
5 Jores **OKORE** (Den) (23) 11.08.92
4 Micah **RICHARDS** (27) 24.06.88
18 Kieran **RICHARDSON** (31) 21.10.84
14 Philippe **SENDEROS** (Swi) (30) 14.02.85

MIDFIELDERS
7 Leandro **BACUNA** (Hol) (24) 21.08.91
12 Joe **COLE** (33) 08.11.81
22 Gary **GARDNER** (23) 29.06.92
25 Carles **GIL** (Spa) (22) 22.11.92
40 Jack **GREALISH** (20) 10.09.95
8 Idrissa **GUEYE** (Sen) (26) 26.09.89
28 Charles **N'ZOGBIA** (Fra) (29) 28.05.86
24 Carlos **SANCHEZ** (Col) (29) 06.02.86
9 Scott **SINCLAIR** (26) 25.03.89
17 Jordan **VERETOUT** (Fra) (22) 01.03.93
15 Ashley **WESTWOOD** (25) 01.04.90

FORWARDS
11 Gabriel **AGBONLAHOR** (28) 13.10.86
19 Jordan **AYEW** (Gha) (24) 11.09.91
39 Rudy **GESTEDE** (Ben) (26) 10.10.88
27 Libor **KOZAK** (CzR) (26) 30.05.89
20 Adama **TRAORE** (Spa) (19) 25.01.96

MANAGER
Vacant

BOURNEMOUTH

GOALKEEPERS
21 Ryan **ALLSOP** (23) 17.06.92
1 Artur **BORUC** (Pol) (35) 20.02.80
23 Adam **FEDERICI** (Aus) (30) 31.01.85

DEFENDERS
33 Joe **BENNETT** (25) 28.03.90
38 Baily **CARGILL** (20) 13.10.95
3 Steve **COOK** (24) 19.04.91
11 Charlie **DANIELS** (29) 07.09.86
25 Sylvain **DISTIN** (Fra) (37) 16.12.77
5 Tommy **ELPHICK** (28) 07.09.87
2 Simon **FRANCIS** (30) 16.02.85
14 Tyrone **MINGS** (22) 13.03.93
15 Adam **SMITH** (24) 29.04.91

MIDFIELDERS
8 Harry **ARTER** (RoI) (25) 28.12.89
4 Dan **GOSLING** (25) 02.02.90
10 Max **GRADEL** (IvC) (27) 30.11.87
16 Shaun **MACDONALD** (Wal) (27) 17.06.88
32 Eunan **O'KANE** (RoI) (25) 10.07.90
7 Marc **PUGH** (28) 02.04.87
30 Matt **RITCHIE** (26) 10.09.89
19 Junior **STANISLAS** (25) 26.11.89
6 Andrew **SURMAN** (29) 20.08.86

FORWARDS
20 Christian **ATSU** (Gha) (23) 10.01.92
18 Yann **KERMORGANT** (Fra) (34) 08.11.81
17 Joshua **KING** (Nor) (23) 15.01.92
27 Glenn **MURRAY** (32) 25.09.83
9 Tokelo **RANTIE** (SAf) (25) 08.09.90
24 Lee **TOMLIN** (26) 12.01.89
13 Callum **WILSON** (23) 27.02.92

MANAGER
Eddie **HOWE** (37) 29.11.77

CHELSEA

GOALKEEPERS
32 Marco **AMELIA** (Ita) (33) 02.04.82
1 Asmir **BEGOVIC** (Bos) (28) 20.06.87
27 Jamal **BLACKMAN** (21) 27.10.93
13 Thibaut **COURTOIS** (Blg) (23) 11.05.92

DEFENDERS
28 Cesar **AZPILICUETA** (Spa) (26) 28.08.89
24 Gary **CAHILL** (29) 19.12.85
15 Papy **DJILOBODJI** (Sen) (26) 01.12.88
2 Branislav **IVANOVIC** (Ser) (31) 22.02.84
6 Baba **RAHMAN** (Gha) (21) 02.07.94
26 John **TERRY** (34) 07.12.80
5 Kurt **ZOUMA** (Fra) (20) 27.10.94

MIDFIELDERS
4 Cesc **FABREGAS** (Spa) (28) 04.05.87
10 Eden **HAZARD** (Blg) (24) 07.01.91
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36 Ruben **LOFTUS-CHEEK** (19) 23.01.96
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7 **RAMIRES** (Bra) (28) 24.03.87
14 Bertrand **TRAORE** (BuF) (20) 06.09.95
22 **WILLIAN** (Bra) (27) 09.08.88

FORWARDS
19 Diego **COSTA** (Spa) (26) 07.10.88
9 Radamel **FALCAO** (Col) (29) 10.02.86
17 **PEDRO** (Spa) (28) 28.07.87
18 Loic **REMY** (Fra) (28) 02.01.87

COACH
Jose **MOURINHO** (Por) (52) 26.01.63

CRYSTAL PALACE

GOALKEEPERS
13 Wayne **HENNESSEY** (Wal) (28) 24.01.87
12 Alex **McCARTHY** (25) 03.12.89
1 Julian **SPERONI** (Arg) (36) 18.05.79

DEFENDERS
6 Scott **DANN** (28) 14.02.87
27 Damien **DELANEY** (RoI) (25) 29.07.81
19 Zeki **FRYERS** (23) 09.09.92
4 Brede **HANGELAND** (Nor) (34) 20.06.81
34 Martin **KELLY** (25) 27.04.90
3 Adrian **MARIAPPA** (Jam) (28) 03.10.86
5 Patrick **McCARTHY** (RoI) (32) 31.05.83
23 Pape **SOUARE** (Sen) (34) 06.06.90
2 Joel **WARD** (25) 29.10.89

MIDFIELDERS
10 Yannick **BOLASIE** (DRC) (26) 24.05.89
7 Yohan **CABAYE** (Fra) (29) 14.01.86
15 Mile **JEDINAK** (Aus) (31) 03.08.84
28 Joe **LEDLEY** (Wal) (28) 23.01.87
14 **LEE** Chung-Yong (SKo) (27) 02.07.88
18 James **McARTHUR** (Sco) (27) 07.10.87
22 Jordon **MUTCH** (23) 02.12.91
42 Jason **PUNCHEON** (29) 26.06.86
26 Bakary **SAKO** (Mli) (27) 24.04.88
11 Wilfried **ZAHA** (22) 10.11.92

FORWARDS
32 Kwesi **APPIAH** (Gha) (25) 12.08.90
8 Patrick **BAMFORD** (22) 05.09.93
9 Fraizer **CAMPBELL** (28) 13.09.87
29 Marouane **CHAMAKH** (Mor) (31) 10.01.84
16 Dwight **GAYLE** (24) 20.10.90
21 Connor **WICKHAM** (22) 31.03.93

MANAGER
Alan **PARDEW** (54) 18.07.61

NEWCASTLE UTD

GOALKEEPERS
26 Karl **DARLOW** (25) 08.10.90
21 Robert **ELLIOT** (RoI) (29) 30.04.86
1 Tim **KRUL** (Hol) (27) 03.04.88
41 Freddie **WOODMAN** (18) 04.03.97

DEFENDERS
2 Fabricio **COLOCCINI** (Arg) (33) 22.01.82
3 Paul **DUMMETT** (Wal) (24) 26.09.91
19 Massadio **HAIDARA** (Fra) (22) 02.12.92
22 Daryl **JANMAAT** (Hol) (26) 22.07.89
15 Jamaal **LASCELLES** (21) 11.12.93
43 Kevin **MBABU** (Swi) (20) 19.04.95
18 Chancel **MBEMBA** (DRC) (21) 08.08.94
27 Steven **TAYLOR** (29) 23.01.86
6 Michael **WILLIAMSON** (31) 08.11.83

MIDFIELDERS
16 Rolando **AARONS** (19) 16.11.95
8 Vurnon **ANITA** (Hol) (26) 04.04.89
4 Jack **COLBACK** (26) 24.10.89
10 Siem **DE JONG** (Hol) (26) 28.01.89
11 Yoan **GOUFFRAN** (Fra) (29) 25.05.86
31 Sylvain **MARVEAUX** (Fra) (29) 15.04.86
14 Gabriel **OBERTAN** (Fra) (26) 26.02.89
7 Moussa **SISSOKO** (Fra) (26) 16.08.89
20 Florian **THAUVIN** (Fra) (22) 26.01.93
24 Cheik **TIOTE** (IvC) (29) 21.06.86
5 Georginio **WIJNALDUM** (Hol) (24) 11.11.90

FORWARDS
9 Papiss **CISSE** (Sen) (30) 03.06.85
45 Aleksandar **MITROVIC** (Ser) (21) 16.09.94
17 Ayoze **PEREZ** (Spa) (22) 23.07.93
29 Emmanuel **RIVIERE** (Fra) (25) 03.03.90
36 Ivan **TONEY** (19) 16.03.96

MANAGER
Steve **McCLAREN** (54) 03.05.61

NORWICH CITY

GOALKEEPERS
31 Jake **KEAN** (24) 04.02.91
13 Declan **RUDD** (24) 16.01.91
1 John **RUDDY** (29) 24.10.86

DEFENDERS
6 Sebastien **BASSONG** (Cam) (29) 09.07.86
24 Ryan **BENNETT** (25) 06.03.90
5 Russell **MARTIN** (Sco) (29) 04.01.86
23 Martin **OLSSON** (Swe) (27) 17.05.88
15 Harry **TOFFOLO** (20) 19.08.95
2 Steven **WHITTAKER** (Sco) (31) 16.06.84
3 Andre **WISDOM** (22) 09.05.93

MIDFIELDERS
17 Elliott **BENNETT** (26) 18.12.88
12 Robbie **BRADY** (RoI) (23) 14.01.92
18 Graham **DORRANS** (Sco) (28) 05.05.87
14 Wesley **HOOLAHAN** (RoI) (33) 20.05.82
8 Jonathan **HOWSON** (27) 21.05.88
16 Matthew **JARVIS** (29) 22.05.86
21 Youssuf **MULUMBU** (DRC) (28) 25.01.87
28 Gary **O'NEIL** (32) 18.05.83
22 Nathan **REDMOND** (21) 06.03.94
27 Alexander **TETTEY** (Nor) (29) 04.04.86

FORWARDS
7 Lewis **GRABBAN** (27) 12.01.88
11 Gary **HOOPER** (27) 26.01.88
10 Cameron **JEROME** (29) 14.08.86
19 Kyle **LAFFERTY** (NI) (28) 16.09.87
9 Dieumerci **MBOKANI** (DRC) (29) 22.11.85

MANAGER
Alex **NEIL** (Sco) (34) 09.06.81

SOUTHAMPTON

GOALKEEPERS
1 Kelvin **DAVIS** (29) 29.09.76
44 Fraser **FORSTER** (27) 17.03.88
25 Paulo **GAZZANIGA** (Arg) (23) 02.01.92
22 Maarten **STEKELENBURG** (Hol) (33) 22.09.82

DEFENDERS
21 Ryan **BERTRAND** (26) 05.08.89
26 Steven **CAULKER** (23) 29.12.91
6 Jose **FONTE** (Por) (31) 22.12.83
5 Florin **GARDOS** (Rom) (27) 29.10.88
15 Cuco **MARTINA** (Cur) (26) 25.09.89
32 Jason **McCARTHY** (19) 07.11.95
2 Cedric **SOARES** (Por) (24) 31.08.91
33 Matt **TARGETT** (20) 18.09.95
17 Virgil **VAN DIJK** (Hol) (24) 08.07.91
3 Maya **YOSHIDA** (Jap) (27) 24.08.88

MIDFIELDERS
4 Jordy **CLASIE** (Hol) (24) 27.06.91
8 Steven **DAVIS** (NI) (30) 01.01.85
27 Lloyd **ISGROVE** (Wal) (22) 12.01.93
38 Sam **MCQUEEN** (20) 06.02.95
23 Gaston **RAMIREZ** (Uru) (24) 02.12.90
18 Harrison **REED** (20) 27.01.95
14 Oriol **ROMEU** (Spa) (24) 24.09.91
11 Dusan **TADIC** (Ser) (26) 20.11.88
12 Victor **WANYAMA** (Ken) (24) 25.06.91
16 James **WARD-PROWSE** (21) 01.11.94

FORWARDS
20 **JUANMI** (Spa) (22) 20.05.93
7 Shane **LONG** (RoI) (28) 22.01.87
10 Sadio **MANE** (Sen) (23) 10.04.92
19 Graziano **PELLE** (Ita) (30) 15.07.85
9 Jay **RODRIGUEZ** (26) 29.07.89

MANAGER
Ronald **KOEMAN** (Hol) (52) 21.03.63

STOKE CITY

GOALKEEPERS
1 Jack **BUTLAND** (22) 10.03.93
24 Shay **GIVEN** (RoI) (39) 20.04.76
29 Jakob **HAUGAARD** (Den) (23) 01.05.92

DEFENDERS
2 Phillip **BARDSLEY** (Sco) (30) 28.06.85
20 Geoff **CAMERON** (USA) (30) 11.07.85
8 Glen **JOHNSON** (31) 23.08.84
5 Marc **MUNIESA** (Spa) (23) 27.03.92
3 Erik **PIETERS** (Hol) (27) 07.08.88
17 Ryan **SHAWCROSS** (28) 04.10.87
12 Marc **WILSON** (RoI) (28) 17.08.87
26 Philipp **WOLLSCHEID** (Ger) (26) 06.03.89

MIDFIELDERS
16 Charlie **ADAM** (Sco) (29) 10.12.85
14 Ibrahim **AFELLAY** (Hol) (29) 02.04.86
7 Stephen **IRELAND** (RoI) (29) 22.08.86
21 Steve **SIDWELL** (32) 14.12.82
22 Xherdan **SHAQIRI** (Swi) (23) 10.10.91
34 Oliver **SHENTON** (18) 06.11.97
15 Marco **VAN GINKEL** (Hol) (22) 01.12.92
6 Glenn **WHELAN** (RoI) (31) 13.01.84

FORWARDS
10 Marko **ARNAUTOVIC** (Aut) (26) 19.04.89
27 **BOJAN** Krkic (Spa) (25) 28.08.90
25 Peter **CROUCH** (34) 30.01.81
18 Mame Biram **DIOUF** (Sen) (27) 16.12.87
30 Moha **EL OURIACHI** (Mor) (19) 13.01.96
11 **JOSELU** (Spa) (25) 27.03.90
9 Peter **ODEMWINGIE** (Nga) (34) 15.07.81
19 Jonathan **WALTERS** (RoI) (31) 20.09.83

MANAGER
Mark **HUGHES** (Wal) (52) 01.11.63

SUNDERLAND

GOALKEEPERS
25 Vito **MANNONE** (Ita) (27) 02.03.88
1 Costel **PANTILIMON** (Rom) (28) 01.02.87
32 Maksymilian **STRYJEK** (Pol) (19) 18.07.96

DEFENDERS
5 Wes **BROWN** (36) 13.10.79
22 Sebastian **COATES** (Uru) (25) 07.10.90
2 Billy **JONES** (28) 24.03.87
15 Younes **KABOUL** (Fra) (29) 04.01.86
12 Adam **MATTHEWS** (Wal) (23) 13.01.92
16 John **O'SHEA** (RoI) (34) 30.04.81
48 Josh **ROBSON** (17) 03.02.98
3 Patrick **VAN AANHOLT** (Hol) (25) 29.08.90
24 DeAndre **YEDLIN** (USA) (22) 09.07.93

MIDFIELDERS
4 Liam **BRIDCUTT** (Sco) (26) 08.05.89
6 Lee **CATTERMOLE** (27) 21.03.88
46 Lynden **GOOCH** (USA) (19) 24.12.95
14 Jordi **GOMEZ** (Spa) (30) 24.05.85
11 Adam **JOHNSON** (28) 14.07.87
7 Sebastian **LARSSON** (Swe) (30) 06.06.85
17 Jeremain **LENS** (Hol) (27) 24.11.87
21 Yann **M'VILA** (Fra) (25) 29.06.90
8 Jack **RODWELL** (24) 11.03.91
41 Duncan **WATMORE** (21) 08.03.94

FORWARDS
9 Fabio **BORINI** (Ita) (24) 29.03.91
18 Jermain **DEFOE** (33) 07.10.82
26 Steven **FLETCHER** (Sco) (28) 26.03.87
19 Danny **GRAHAM** (30) 12.08.85
20 Ola **TOIVONEN** (Swe) (29) 03.07.86

MANAGER
Sam **ALLARDYCE** (61) 19.10.54

EVERTON

GOALKEEPERS
24 Tim **HOWARD** (USA) (36) 06.03.79
1 Joel **ROBLES** (Spa) (25) 17.06.90

DEFENDERS
3 Leighton **BAINES** (30) 11.12.84
27 Tyias **BROWNING** (21) 27.05.94
23 Seamus **COLEMAN** (RoI) (27) 11.10.88
25 Ramiro **FUNES MORI** (Arg) (24) 03.05.91
32 Brendan **GALLOWAY** (19) 17.03.96
2 Tony **HIBBERT** (34) 20.02.81
6 Phil **JAGIELKA** (33) 17.08.82
38 Matthew **PENNINGTON** (21) 06.10.94
5 John **STONES** (21) 28.05.94

MIDFIELDERS
20 Ross **BARKLEY** (21) 05.12.93
18 Gareth **BARRY** (34) 23.02.81
17 Muhamed **BESIC** (Bos) (23) 10.09.92
15 Tom **CLEVERLEY** (26) 12.08.89
4 Darron **GIBSON** (RoI) (28) 25.10.87
30 Mason **HOLGATE** (19) 22.10.96
12 Aaron **LENNON** (28) 16.04.87
16 James **McCARTHY** (RoI) (24) 12.11.90
7 Aidan **McGEADY** (RoI) (29) 04.04.86
21 Leon **OSMAN** (34) 17.05.81
8 Bryan **OVIEDO** (CR) (25) 18.02.90
22 Steven **PIENAAR** (SAf) (33) 17.03.82

FORWARDS
19 Gerard **DEULOFEU** (Spa) (21) 13.03.94
9 Arouna **KONE** (IvC) (31) 11.11.83
10 Romelu **LUKAKU** (Blg) (22) 13.05.93
11 Kevin **MIRALLAS** (Blg) (28) 05.10.87
14 Steven **NAISMITH** (Sco) (29) 14.09.86
28 Leandro **RODRIGUEZ** (Uru) (22) 19.11.92

MANAGER
Roberto **MARTINEZ** (Spa) (42) 13.07.73

LEICESTER CITY

GOALKEEPERS
1 Kasper **SCHMEICHEL** (Den) (29) 05.11.86
32 Mark **SCHWARZER** (Aus) (43) 06.10.72

DEFENDERS
29 Yohan **BENALOUANE** (Tun) (28) 28.03.87
30 Ben **CHILWELL** (18) 21.12.96
2 Ritchie **DE LAET** (Blg) (26) 28.11.88
28 Christian **FUCHS** (Aut) (29) 07.04.86
6 Robert **HUTH** (Ger) (31) 18.08.84
5 Wes **MORGAN** (Jam) (31) 21.01.84
15 Jeff **SCHLUPP** (Gha) (22) 23.12.92
17 Danny **SIMPSON** (28) 04.01.87
27 Marcin **WASILEWSKI** (Pol) (35) 09.06.80

MIDFIELDERS
11 Marc **ALBRIGHTON** (25) 18.11.89
4 Danny **DRINKWATER** (25) 05.03.90
24 Nathan **DYER** (27) 29.11.87
33 Gokhan **INLER** (Swi) (31) 27.06.84
8 Matty **JAMES** (24) 22.07.91
14 N'Golo **KANTE** (Fra) (24) 29.03.91
10 Andy **KING** (Wal) (27) 29.10.88
39 Andre **OLUKANMI** (17) 01.12.97

FORWARDS
36 Joe **DODOO** (20) 29.06.95
19 Andrej **KRAMARIC** (Cro) (24) 19.06.91
26 Riyad **MAHREZ** (Alg) (24) 21.02.91
20 Shinji **OKAZAKI** (Jap) (29) 16.04.86
38 Harry **PANAYIOTOU** (StK) (21) 28.10.94
23 Leonardo **ULLOA** (Arg) (29) 26.07.86
9 Jamie **VARDY** (28) 11.01.87

MANAGER
Claudio **RANIERI** (Ita) (64) 20.10.5

LIVERPOOL

GOALKEEPERS
34 Adam **BOGDAN** (Hun) (27) 27.09.87
39 Ryan **FULTON** (Sco) (19) 23.05.96
22 Simon **MIGNOLET** (Blg) (27) 06.03.88

DEFENDERS
58 Daniel **CLEARY** (RoI) (19) 09.03.96
2 Nathaniel **CLYNE** (24) 05.04.91
3 Jose **ENRIQUE** (Spa) (29) 23.01.86
38 Jon **FLANAGAN** (22) 21.01.93
12 Joe **GOMEZ** (18) 23.05.97
6 Dejan **LOVREN** (Cro) (26) 05.07.89
18 Alberto **MORENO** (Spa) (23) 05.07.92
17 Mamadou **SAKHO** (Fra) (25) 13.02.90
37 Martin **SKRTEL** (Slk) (30) 15.12.84
4 Kolo **TOURE** (IvC) (34) 19.03.81

MIDFIELDERS
24 Joe **ALLEN** (Wal) (25) 14.03.90
32 Cameron **BRANNAGAN** (19) 09.05.96
23 Emre **CAN** (Ger) (21) 12.01.94
68 Pedro **CHIRIVELLA** (Spa) (18) 23.05.97
10 Philippe **COUTINHO** (Bra) (23) 12.06.92
11 Roberto **FIRMINO** (Bra) (23) 02.10.91
14 Jordan **HENDERSON** (25) 17.06.90
33 Jordon **IBE** (19) 08.12.95
20 Adam **LALLANA** (27) 10.05.88
21 **LUCAS** Leiva (Bra) (28) 09.01.87
7 James **MILNER** (29) 04.01.86
56 Connor **RANDALL** (19) 21.10.95
46 Jordan **ROSSITER** (18) 24.03.97

FORWARDS
9 Christian **BENTEKE** (Blg) (24) 03.12.90
28 Danny **INGS** (23) 16.03.92
27 Divock **ORIGI** (Blg) (20) 18.04.95
15 Daniel **STURRIDGE** (26) 01.09.89

MANAGER
Jurgen **KLOPP** (Ger) (48) 16.06.67

MANCHESTER CITY

GOALKEEPERS
13 Willy **CABALLERO** (Arg) (33) 28.09.81
1 Joe **HART** (28) 19.04.87
29 Richard **WRIGHT** (37) 05.11.77

DEFENDERS
22 Gael **CLICHY** (Fra) (30) 26.07.85
26 Martin **DEMICHELIS** (Arg) (34) 20.12.80
11 Aleksandar **KOLAROV** (Ser) (29) 10.11.85
4 Vincent **KOMPANY** (Blg) (29) 10.04.86
20 Eliaquim **MANGALA** (Fra) (24) 13.02.91
30 Nicolas **OTAMENDI** (Arg) (27) 12.02.88
3 Bacary **SAGNA** (Fra) (32) 14.02.83
5 Pablo **ZABALETA** (Arg) (30) 16.01.85

MIDFIELDERS
62 Brandon **BARKER** (18) 04.10.96
18 Fabian **DELPH** (25) 21.11.89
70 George **EVANS** (20) 13.12.94
25 **FERNANDINHO** (Bra) (30) 04.05.85
6 **FERNANDO** (Bra) (28) 25.07.87
8 Samir **NASRI** (Fra) (28) 26.06.87
15 Jesus **NAVAS** (Spa) (29) 21.11.85
27 Patrick **ROBERTS** (18) 05.02.97
21 David **SILVA** (Spa) (29) 08.01.86
42 Yaya **TOURE** (IvC) (32) 13.05.83
36 Bruno **ZUCCULINI** (Arg) (22) 03.04.93

FORWARDS
10 Sergio **AGUERO** (Arg) (27) 02.06.88
14 Wilfried **BONY** (IvC) (26) 10.12.88
17 Kevin **DE BRUYNE** (Blg) (24) 28.06.91
72 Kelechi **IHEANACHO** (Nga) (18) 03.10.96
7 Raheem **STERLING** (20) 08.12.94

COACH
Manuel **PELLEGRINI** (Chl) (61) 16.09.53

MANCHESTER UTD

GOALKEEPERS
1 David **DE GEA** (Spa) (24) 07.11.90
50 Sam **JOHNSTONE** (22) 25.03.93
20 Sergio **ROMERO** (Arg) (28) 22.02.87

DEFENDERS
17 Daley **BLIND** (Hol) (25) 09.03.90
36 Matteo **DARMIAN** (Ita) (25) 02.12.89
4 Phil **JONES** (23) 21.02.92
33 Paddy **McNAIR** (NI) (20) 27.04.95
5 Marcos **ROJO** (Arg) (25) 20.03.90
23 Luke **SHAW** (20) 12.07.95
12 Chris **SMALLING** (25) 22.11.89
30 Guillermo **VARELA** (Uru) (22) 24.03.93

MIDFIELDERS
16 Michael **CARRICK** (34) 28.07.81
27 Marouane **FELLAINI** (Blg) (27) 22.11.87
21 Ander **HERRERA** (Spa) (26) 14.08.89
35 Jesse **LINGARD** (22) 15.12.92
8 Juan **MATA** (Spa) (27) 28.04.88
44 Andreas **PEREIRA** (Blg) (19) 01.01.96
22 Nick **POWELL** (21) 23.03.94
28 Morgan **SCHNEIDERLIN** (Fra) (25) 08.11.89
31 Bastian **SCHWEINSTEIGER** (Ger) (31) 01.08.84
25 Antonio **VALENCIA** (Ecu) (30) 04.08.85
18 Ashley **YOUNG** (30) 09.07.85

FORWARDS
7 Memphis **DEPAY** (Hol) (21) 13.02.94
9 Anthony **MARTIAL** (Fra) (19) 05.12.95
10 Wayne **ROONEY** (29) 24.10.85
19 James **WILSON** (19) 01.12.95

COACH
Louis **VAN GAAL** (Hol) (64) 08.08.51

SWANSEA CITY

GOALKEEPERS
1 Lukasz **FABIANSKI** (Pol) (30) 18.04.85
13 Kristoffer **NORDFELDT** (Swe) (26) 23.06.89
25 Gerhard **TREMMEL** (Ger) (36) 16.11.78

DEFENDERS
2 Jordi **AMAT** (Spa) (23) 21.03.92
27 Kyle **BARTLEY** (24) 22.05.91
33 Federico **FERNANDEZ** (Arg) (26) 21.02.89
26 Kyle **NAUGHTON** (26) 11.11.88
22 Angel **RANGEL** (Spa) (33) 28.10.82
32 Liam **SHEPHARD** (Wal) (20) 22.11.94
14 Franck **TABANOU** (Fra) (26) 30.01.89
3 Neil **TAYLOR** (Wal) (26) 07.02.89
6 Ashley **WILLIAMS** (Wal) (31) 23.08.84

MIDFIELDERS
7 Leon **BRITTON** (33) 16.09.82
24 Jack **CORK** (26) 25.06.89
21 Matt **GRIMES** (20) 15.07.95
4 **KI** Sung-yueng (SKo) (26) 24.01.89
31 Lee **LUCAS** (Wal) (23) 10.06.92
15 Wayne **ROUTLEDGE** (30) 07.01.85
8 Jonjo **SHELVEY** (23) 27.02.92
23 Gylfi **SIGURDSSON** (Ice) (26) 08.09.89

FORWARDS
10 Andre **AYEW** (Gha) (25) 17.12.89
58 Modou **BARROW** (Gam) (23) 13.10.92
17 **EDER** (Por) (27) 22.12.87
11 Marvin **EMNES** (Hol) (27) 27.05.88
18 Bafetibis **GOMIS** (Fra) (30) 06.08.85
20 Jefferson **MONTERO** (Ecu) (26) 01.09.89

MANAGER
Garry **MONK** (36) 06.03.79

TOTTENHAM H

GOALKEEPERS
1 Hugo **LLORIS** (Fra) (28) 26.12.86
13 Michel **VORM** (Hol) (32) 20.10.83

DEFENDERS
4 Toby **ALDERWEIRELD** (Blg) (26) 02.03.89
33 Ben **DAVIES** (Wal) (22) 24.04.93
21 Federico **FAZIO** (Arg) (28) 17.03.87
3 Danny **ROSE** (25) 02.07.90
16 Kieran **TRIPPIER** (25) 19.09.90
5 Jan **VERTONGHEN** (Blg) (28) 24.04.87
2 Kyle **WALKER** (25) 28.05.90
27 Kevin **WIMMER** (Aut) (22) 15.11.92

MIDFIELDERS
20 Dele **ALLI** (19) 11.04.96
6 Nabil **BENTALEB** (Alg) (20) 24.11.94
28 Tom **CARROLL** (23) 28.05.92
22 Nacer **CHADLI** (Blg) (26) 02.08.89
15 Eric **DIER** (21) 15.01.94
19 Mousa **DEMBELE** (Blg) (28) 17.07.87
23 Christian **ERIKSEN** (Den) (23) 14.02.92
11 Erik **LAMELA** (Arg) (23) 25.03.92
8 Ryan **MASON** (24) 13.06.91
24 Alex **PRITCHARD** (22) 03.05.93
17 Andros **TOWNSEND** (24) 16.07.91
29 Harry **WINKS** (19) 02.02.96

FORWARDS
10 Harry **KANE** (22) 28.07.93
14 Clinton **N'JIE** (Cam) (22) 15.08.93
25 Joshua **ONOMAH** (18) 27.04.97
7 **SON** Heung-min (SKo) (23) 08.07.92

MANAGER
Mauricio **POCHETTINO** (Arg) (43) 02.03.72

WATFORD

GOALKEEPERS
34 Giedrius **ARLAUSKIS** (Lit) (27) 01.12.87
13 Rene **GILMARTIN** (RoI) (28) 31.05.87
1 Heurelho **GOMES** (Bra) (34) 15.02.81

DEFENDERS
16 Nathan **AKE** (Hol) (20) 18.02.95
27 Essaid **BELKALEM** (Alg) (26) 01.01.89
3 Miguel **BRITOS** (Uru) (30) 17.07.85
15 Craig **CATHCART** (NI) (26) 06.02.89
31 Tommie **HOBAN** (RoI) (21) 24.01.94
25 Jose **HOLEBAS** (Gre) (31) 27.06.84
30 Jorell **JOHNSON** (19) 02.01.96
2 Allan-Romeo **NYOM** (Cam) (27) 10.05.88
14 Juan Carlos **PAREDES** (Ecu) (28) 08.07.87
5 Sebastian **PRODL** (Aut) (28) 21.06.87

MIDFIELDERS
22 Almen **ABDI** (Swi) (29) 21.10.86
21 Ikechi **ANYA** (Sco) (27) 03.01.88
8 Valon **BEHRAMI** (Swi) (30) 19.04.85
20 Steven **BERGHUIS** (Hol) (23) 19.12.91
40 George **BYERS** (Sco) (19) 29.05.96
29 Etienne **CAPOUE** (Fra) (27) 11.07.88
35 Josh **DOHERTY** (NI) (19) 15.03.96
33 Lloyd **DYER** (33) 13.09.82
17 Adlene **GUEDIOURA** (Alg) (29) 12.11.85
7 Jose Manuel **JURADO** (Spa) (29) 29.06.86
23 Ben **WATSON** (30) 09.07.85

FORWARDS
9 Troy **DEENEY** (27) 29.06.88
32 Alessandro **DIAMANTI** (Ita) (32) 02.05.83
19 Victor **IBARBO** (Col) (25) 19.05.90
24 Odion **IGHALO** (Nga) (26) 16.06.89
36 Alex **JAKUBIAK** (19) 27.08.96
26 Bernard **MENSAH** (20) 29.12.94
10 Obbi **OULARE** (Blg) (19) 08.01.96

MANAGER
Quique **SANCHEZ FLORES** (Spa) (50) 05.02.65

WEST BROMWICH

GOALKEEPERS
1 Ben **FOSTER** (32) 03.04.83
21 Anders **LINDEGAARD** (Den) (31) 13.04.84
13 Boaz **MYHILL** (Wal) (32) 09.11.82
38 Jack **ROSE** (20) 31.01.95

DEFENDERS
4 James **CHESTER** (Wal) (26) 23.01.89
25 Craig **DAWSON** (25) 06.05.90
46 Shaun **DONNELLAN** (RoI) (18) 22.05.97
6 Jonny **EVANS** (NI) (27) 02.01.88
16 Cristian **GAMBOA** (CR) (26) 24.10.89
23 Gareth **McAULEY** (NI) (35) 05.12.79
3 Jonas **OLSSON** (Swe) (32) 10.03.83
15 Sebastien **POCOGNOLI** (Blg) (28) 01.08.87

MIDFIELDERS
11 Chris **BRUNT** (NI) (30) 14.12.84
42 Kyle **EDWARDS** (17) 17.02.98
24 Darren **FLETCHER** (Sco) (31) 01.02.84
8 Craig **GARDNER** (28) 25.11.86
31 Serge **GNABRY** (Ger) (20) 14.07.95
14 James **McCLEAN** (RoI) (26) 22.04.89
19 Callum **McMANAMAN** (24) 25.04.91
7 James **MORRISON** (Sco) (29) 25.05.86
29 Stephane **SESSEGNON** (Ben) (31) 01.06.84
41 Joe **WARD** (19) 27.09.96
5 Claudio **YACOB** (Arg) (28) 18.07.87

FORWARDS
10 Victor **ANICHEBE** (Nga) (27) 23.04.88
18 Saido **BERAHINO** (22) 04.08.93
17 Rickie **LAMBERT** (33) 16.02.82
33 Salomon **RONDON** (Ven) (26) 16.09.89

MANAGER
Tony **PULIS** (Wal) (57) 16.01.58

WEST HAM UNITED

GOALKEEPERS
13 **ADRIAN** (Spa) (28) 03.01.87
1 Darren **RANDOLPH** (RoI) (28) 12.05.87
34 Raphael **SPIEGEL** (Swi) (22) 19.12.92

DEFENDERS
19 James **COLLINS** (Wal) (32) 23.08.83
3 Aaron **CRESSWELL** (25) 15.12.89
12 Carl **JENKINSON** (23) 08.02.92
45 Kyle **KNOYLE** (19) 24.09.96
17 Joey **O'BRIEN** (RoI) (29) 17.02.86
21 Angelo **OGBONNA** (Ita) (27) 23.05.88
35 Reece **OXFORD** (16) 16.12.98
2 Winston **REID** (NZ) (27) 03.07.88
5 James **TOMKINS** (26) 29.03.89

MIDFIELDERS
18 Morgan **AMALFITANO** (Fra) (30) 20.03.85
30 Michail **ANTONIO** (25) 28.03.90
39 Josh **CULLEN** (RoI) (19) 07.04.96
8 Cheikhou **KOUYATA** (Sen) (25) 21.12.89
28 Manuel **LANZINI** (Arg) (22) 15.02.93
16 Mark **NOBLE** (28) 08.05.87
14 Pedro **OBIANG** (Spa) (23) 27.03.92
27 Dimitri **PAYET** (Fra) (28) 29.03.87
42 Martin **SAMUELSEN** (Nor) (18) 17.04.97
4 Alexandre **SONG** (Cam) (28) 09.09.87

FORWARDS
9 Andy **CARROLL** (26) 06.01.89
26 Nikica **JELAVIC** (Cro) (30) 27.08.85
36 Elliott **LEE** (20) 16.12.94
20 Victor **MOSES** (Nga) (24) 12.12.90
15 Diafra **SAKHO** (Sen) (25) 24.12.89
11 Enner **VALENCIA** (Ecu) (25) 04.11.89
10 Mauro **ZARATE** (Arg) (28) 18.03.87

MANAGER
Slaven **BILIC** (Cro) (47) 11.09.67

(ages as of 06.1.15)

LIGUE 1

ANGERS

GOALKEEPERS
1 Ludovic **BUTELLE** (32) 03.04.83
30 Alexandre **LETELLIER** (24) 11.12.90

DEFENDERS
21 Yoann **ANDREU** (26) 03.05.89
2 Gael **ANGOULA** (33) 18.07.82
18 Ibrahima **DIALLO** (Gui) (30) 26.09.85
6 Ismael **KEITA** (Mli) (25) 08.07.90
4 Bilel **MOHSNI** (Tun) (28) 21.07.87
3 Arnold Bouka **MOUTOU** (Con) (26) 28.11.88
24 Romain **THOMAS** (27) 12.06.88
8 Ismael **TRAORE** (IvC) (29) 18.08.86
25 Anther **YAHIA** (Alg) (33) 21.03.82

MIDFIELDERS
7 Olivier **AURIAC** (32) 14.09.83
9 Abdoul **CAMARA** (Gui) (25) 20.02.90
15 Pierrick **CAPELLE** (28) 15.04.87
20 Charles **DIERS** (34) 06.06.81
23 Yohan **EUDELINE** (33) 23.06.82
29 Vincent **MANCEAU** (26) 10.07.89
5 Thomas **MANGANI** (28) 29.04.87
17 Cheick **N'DOYE** (Sen) (29) 29.03.86
26 Guy **N'GOSSO** (Cam) (30) 11.11.85
28 Romain **SAISS** (Mor) (25) 26.03.90
19 Mathias **SERIN** (24) 01.08.91

FORWARDS
27 Ferebory **DORE** (Con) (26) 21.01.89
22 Goran **KARANOVIC** (Swi) (28) 13.10.87
14 Billy **KETKEOPHOMPHONE** (25) 24.03.90
12 Jean-Pierre **NSAME** (Cam) (22) 01.05.93
11 Slimane **SISSOKO** (24) 20.03.91
10 Gilles **SUNU** (24) 30.03.91

COACH
Stephane **MOULIN** (48) 04.08.67

BASTIA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Jesper **HANSEN** (Den) (30) 31.03.85
16 Jean-Louis **LECA** (30) 21.09.85
30 Thomas **VINCENSINI** (22) 12.09.93

DEFENDERS
29 Gilles **CIONI** (31) 14.06.84
23 Alexander **DJIKU** (21) 09.08.94
24 Yassine **JEBBOUR** (Mor) (24) 24.08.91
28 Florian **MARANGE** (29) 03.03.86
20 Francois **MODESTO** (37) 19.08.78
15 Julian **PALMIERI** (28) 17.12.86
17 Mathieu **PEYBERNES** (25) 21.10.90
5 Sebastien **SQUILLACI** (35) 11.08.80

MIDFIELDERS
7 Floyd **AYITE** (Tog) (26) 15.12.88
18 Yannick **CAHUZAC** (30) 18.01.85
33 Lassana **COULIBALY** (Mli) (19) 10.04.96
8 Gael **DANIC** (33) 19.11.81
6 Seko **FOFANA** (20) 07.05.95
10 Lyes **HOURI** (19) 19.01.96
12 Abdoulaye **KEITA** (Mli) (21) 05.01.94
22 Christopher **MABOULOU** (25) 19.03.90
14 Mehdi **MOSTEFA** (Alg) (32) 30.08.83
19 Axel **NGANDO** (22) 13.07.93

FORWARDS
11 **BRANDAO** (Bra) (35) 16.06.80
2 Sadio **DIALLO** (Gui) (24) 28.12.90
25 Francois **KAMANO** (Gui) (19) 01.05.96
9 Florian **RASPENTINO** (26) 06.06.89

COACH
Ghislain **PRINTANT** (54) 13.05.61

BORDEAUX

GOALKEEPERS
16 Cedric **CARRASSO** (33) 30.12.81
1 Simon **LEFEBVRE** (18) 06.05.97
30 Jerome **PRIOR** (20) 08.08.95

DEFENDERS
3 Diego **CONTENTO** (Ger) (25) 01.05.90
2 Milan **GAJIC** (Ser) (19) 28.01.96
26 Frederic **GUILBERT** (20) 24.12.94
4 **PABLO** (Bra) (24) 21.06.91
5 Nicolas **PALLOIS** (28) 19.09.87
29 Maxime **POUNDJE** (23) 16.08.92
6 Ludovic **SANE** (Sen) (28) 22.03.87
21 Cedric **YAMBERE** (28) 06.11.90

MIDFIELDERS
11 Clement **CHANTOME** (28) 11.09.87
24 Wahbi **KHAZRI** (Tun) (24) 08.02.91
19 Nicolas **MAURICE-BELAY** (30) 19.04.85
17 Andre **POKO** (Gab) (22) 01.01.93
18 Jaroslav **PLASIL** (CzR) (33) 05.01.82
10 Henri **SAIVET** (Sen) (24) 26.10.90
8 Gregory **SERTIC** (26) 05.08.89
28 Kevin **SONI** (Cam) (17) 17.04.98
7 Abdou **TRAORE** (Mli) (27) 17.01.88
23 Valentin **VADA** (Arg) (19) 06.03.96

FORWARDS
27 Enzo **CRIVELLI** (20) 06.02.95
14 Cheikh **DIABATE** (Mli) (27) 25.04.88
20 **JUSSIE** (Bra) (32) 19.09.83
15 Gaetan **LABORDE** (21) 03.05.94
9 Diego **ROLAN** (Uru) (22) 24.03.93
12 Isaac Kiese **THELIN** (Swe) (23) 24.06.92
13 Thomas **TOURE** (IvC) (21) 27.12.93

COACH
Willy **SAGNOL** (38) 18.03.77

CAEN

GOALKEEPERS
16 Louis **DESCHATEAUX** (18) 16.04.97
30 Paul **REULET** (21) 14.01.94
1 Remy **VERCOUTRE** (35) 26.06.80

DEFENDERS
21 Chaker **ALHADHUR** (Com) (23) 04.12.91
12 Dennis **APPIAH** (23) 09.06.92
13 Syam **BEN YOUSSEF** (Tun) (26) 31.03.89
28 Damien **DA SILVA** (27) 17.05.88
15 Emmanuel **IMOROU** (Ben) (27) 16.09.88
29 Florian **LE JONCOUR** (20) 03.02.95
22 Alexandre **RAINEAU** (29) 21.06.86
5 Alaeddine **YAHIA** (Tun) (34) 26.08.81

MIDFIELDERS
18 Jordan **ADEOTI** (Ben) (26) 12.03.89
26 Jonathan **BEAULIEU** (22) 11.03.93
11 Vincent **BESSAT** (29) 08.11.85
6 Jonathan **DELAPLACE** (29) 20.03.86
25 Julien **FERET** (33) 05.07.82
19 Jordan **LEBORGNE** (20) 29.09.95
17 Jean-Victor **MAKENGO** (17) 12.06.98
8 Jordan **N'KOLOLO** (DRC) (22) 09.11.92
2 Nicolas **SEUBE** (36) 11.08.79

FORWARDS
20 Herve **BAZILE** (Hai) (25) 18.03.90
9 Andy **DELORT** (23) 09.10.91
14 Jeff **LOUIS** (Hai) (23) 08.08.90
10 Saidi **NTIBAZONKIZA** (Brd) (28) 01.05.87
23 Ronny **RODELIN** (25) 18.11.89

COACH
Patrice **GARANDE** (54) 27.11.60

GAZELEC AJACCIO

GOALKEEPERS
30 Jules **GODA** (Cam) (26) 30.05.89
1 Clement **MAURY** (29) 20.11.85

DEFENDERS
5 Jeremie **BRECHET** (36) 14.08.79
29 Alexandre **COEFF** (23) 20.02.92
6 David **DUCOURTIOUX** (37) 11.04.78
4 Roderic **FILIPPI** (26) 25.02.89
15 Kader **MANGANE** (Sen) (32) 23.03.83
21 Pablo **MARTINEZ** (26) 21.02.89
3 Issiaga **SYLLA** (Gui) (21) 01.01.94
13 Alassane **TOURE** (26) 09.02.89

MIDFIELDERS
22 Issiar **DIA** (Sen) (28) 08.06.87
23 Damjan **DJOKOVIC** (Cro) (25) 11.09.89
10 Mohamed **LARBI** (Tun) (28) 02.09.87
8 Jerome **LEMOIGNE** (32) 15.02.83
20 Louis **POGGI** (31) 18.06.84
18 Amos **YOUGA** (22) 08.12.92

FORWARDS
9 Khalid **BOUTAIB** (28) 24.04.87
7 Kevin **MAYI** (22) 14.01.93
28 Gregory **PUJOL** (35) 25.01.80
24 John **TSHIBUMBU** (DRC) (26) 06.01.89
19 Jacques **ZOUA** (Cam) (24) 06.09.91

COACH
Thierry **LAUREY** (51) 17.02.64

MONACO

GOALKEEPERS
16 Paul **NARDI** (21) 18.05.94
1 Danijel **SUBASIC** (Cro) (31) 27.10.84
30 Seydou **SY** (Sen) (19) 12.12.95

DEFENDERS
6 Ricardo **CARVALHO** (Por) (37) 18.05.78
4 Fabio **COENTRAO** (Por) (27) 11.03.88
42 Raphael **DIARRA** (20) 27.05.95
21 Elderson **ECHIEJILE** (Nga) (27) 20.01.88
2 **FABINHO** (Bra) (22) 23.10.93
24 Andrea **RAGGI** (Ita) (31) 24.06.84
38 Almary **TOURE** (Mli) (19) 28.04.96
13 **WALLACE** (Bra) (21) 14.10.94

MIDFIELDERS
12 Fares **BAHLOULI** (20) 08.04.95
14 Tiemoue **BAKAYOKO** (21) 17.08.94
29 Gabriel **BOSCHILIA** (Bra) (19) 05.03.96
18 Helder **COSTA** (Por) (21) 12.01.94
7 Nabil **DIRAR** (Mor) (29) 25.02.86
27 Thomas **LEMAR** (19) 12.11.95
25 Marcos **LOPES** (Por) (19) 28.12.95
44 Jonathan **MEXIQUE** (20) 10.03.95
8 Joao **MOUTINHO** (Por) (29) 08.09.86
20 Mario **PASALIC** (Cro) (20) 09.02.95
10 Bernardo **SILVA** (Por) (21) 10.08.94
37 Aboud Aziz **THIAM** (18) 15.01.97
28 Jeremy **TOULALAN** (32) 10.09.83
23 Adama **TRAORE** (Mli) (20) 28.06.95

FORWARDS
11 Guido **CARRILLO** (Arg) (24) 25.05.91
17 Ivan **CAVALEIRO** (Por) (22) 18.10.93
22 Stephan **EL SHAARAWY** (Ita) (23) 27.10.92
19 Lacina **TRAORE** (IvC) (25) 20.08.90

COACH
Leonardo **JARDIM** (Por) (41) 01.08.74

MONTPELLIER

GOALKEEPERS
16 Geoffrey **JOURDREN** (29) 04.02.86
30 Jonathan **LIGALI** (24) 28.05.91
1 Laurent **PIONNIER** (33) 24.05.82

DEFENDERS
15 Ramy **BENSEBAINI** (Alg) (20) 16.04.95
3 Daniel **CONGRE** (30) 05.04.85
25 Mathieu **DEPLAGNE** (24) 01.10.91
35 Dylan **GISSI** (Swi) (24) 27.04.91
4 **HILTON** (Bra) (38) 13.09.77
2 Mamadou **N'DIAYE** (Sen) (20) 28.05.95
21 William **REMY** (24) 04.04.91
24 Jerome **ROUSSILLON** (22) 06.01.93

MIDFIELDERS
10 Ryad **BOUDEBOUZ** (Alg) (25) 19.02.90
14 Bryan **DABO** (23) 18.02.92
17 Paul **LASNE** (26) 16.01.89
8 Jonas **MARTIN** (25) 09.04.90
6 Joris **MARVEAUX** (33) 15.08.82
23 Jamel **SAIHI** (Tun) (28) 27.01.87
20 Morgan **SANSON** (21) 18.08.94
13 Ellyes **SKHIRI** (20) 10.05.95
22 Sebastien **WUTHRICH** (Swi) (25) 29.05.90

FORWARDS
28 Djamel **BAKAR** (26) 06.04.89
26 Kevin **BERIGAUD** (27) 09.05.88
19 Souleymane **CAMARA** (Sen) (32) 22.12.82
31 Quentin **CORNETTE** (21) 17.01.94
32 Jean **DEZA** (Per) (22) 09.06.93
29 Casimir **NINGA** (Chd) (22) 17.05.93
12 Florian **SOTOCA** (25) 25.10.90
9 Mustapha **YATABARE** (Mli) (29) 26.01.86

COACH
Rolland **COURBIS** (62) 12.08.53

NANTES

GOALKEEPERS
30 Maxime **DUPE** (22) 04.03.93
16 Alexandre **OLLIERO** (19) 15.02.96
1 Remy **RIOU** (28) 06.08.87

DEFENDERS
5 Lorik **CANA** (Alb) (32) 27.07.83
26 Koffi **DJIDJI** (22) 30.11.92
15 Leo **DUBOIS** (21) 14.09.94
36 Enock **KWATENG** (18) 30.04.97
3 Ermir **LENJANI** (Alb) (26) 05.08.89
13 Wilfried **MOIMBE** (27) 18.10.88
14 Youssouf **SABALY** (22) 05.03.93
4 Oswaldo **VIZCARRONDO** (Ven) (31) 31.05.84
17 Anthony **WALONGWA** (DRC) (22) 15.10.93

MIDFIELDERS
23 **ADRYAN** (Bra) (21) 08.10.94
21 Johan **AUDEL** (31) 12.12.83
7 Alejandro **BEDOYA** (USA) (28) 29.04.87
18 Lucas **DEAUX** (26) 26.12.88
6 Remi **GOMIS** (Sen) (31) 14.02.84
20 Jules **ILOKI** (DRC) (23) 14.01.92
28 Valentin **RONGIER** (20) 07.12.94
8 Adrien **THOMASSON** (21) 10.12.93
19 Abdoulaye **TOURE** (21) 03.03.94
12 Birama **TOURE** (Mli) (23) 06.06.92

FORWARDS
10 Yacine **BAMMOU** (Mor) (24) 11.09.91
11 Ismael **BANGOURA** (Gui) (30) 02.01.85
27 Adama **NIANE** (Mli) (22) 16.06.93
22 Emiliano **SALA** (Arg) (25) 31.10.90
9 Kolbeinn **SIGTHORSSON** (Ice) (25) 14.03.90

COACH
Michel **DER ZAKARIAN** (Arm) (52) 18.02.63

NICE

GOALKEEPERS
30 Yoan **CARDINALE** (21) 27.03.94
40 Andrea **GAMBETTA** (19) 13.08.96
1 Mouez **HASSAN** (20) 05.03.95
16 Simon **POUPLIN** (30) 28.05.85

DEFENDERS
4 Paul **BAYSSE** (27) 15.05.88
24 Mathieu **BODMER** (32) 22.11.82
33 Olivier **BOSCAGLI** (17) 18.11.97
35 Jonathan **CORREIA DA FONSECA** (21) 13.02.94
25 Romain **GENEVOIS** (Hai) (28) 28.10.87
5 Kevin **GOMIS** (26) 20.01.89
20 Maxime **LE MARCHAND** (26) 10.11.89
3 Gautier **LLORIS** (20) 18.07.95
23 Ricardo **PEREIRA** (Por) (22) 06.10.93

MIDFIELDERS
9 Hatem **BEN ARFA** (28) 07.03.87
13 Niklas **HULT** (Swe) (25) 13.02.90
26 Vincent **KOZIELLO** (20) 28.10.95
19 Wallyson **MALLMANN** (Bra) (21) 16.02.94
15 Alexandre **MENDY** (21) 20.03.94
22 Nampalys **MENDY** (23) 23.06.92
12 Albert **RAFETRANIAINA** (19) 09.09.96
21 Stephan **RAHERIHARIMANANA** (Mad) (22) 16.08.93
6 Jean **SERI** (IvC) (24) 19.07.91
8 Mahamane **TRAORE** (Mli) (27) 31.08.88
7 Julien **VERCAUTEREN** (Blg) (22) 12.01.93

FORWARDS
11 Said **BENRAHMA** (Alg) (20) 10.08.95
27 Bryan **CONSTANT** (21) 27.03.94
28 Valere **GERMAIN** (25) 17.04.90
34 Franck **HONORAT** (19) 11.08.96
10 Mickael **LE BIHAN** (25) 16.05.90
29 Jeremy **PIED** (26) 23.02.89
14 Alassane **PLEA** (22) 10.03.93
34 Paulin **PUEL** (18) 09.05.97

COACH
Claude **PUEL** (54) 02.09.61

PARIS ST-GERMAIN

GOALKEEPERS
1 Nicolas **DOUCHEZ** (35) 22.04.80
30 Salvatore **SIRIGU** (Ita) (28) 12.01.87
16 Kevin **TRAPP** (Ger) (25) 08.07.90

DEFENDERS
19 Serge **AURIER** (IvC) (22) 24.12.92
3 Presnel **KIMPEMBE** (20) 13.08.95
20 Layvin **KURZAWA** (23) 04.09.92
32 David **LUIZ** (Bra) (28) 22.04.87
5 **MARQUINHOS** (Bra) (21) 14.05.94
17 **MAXWELL** (Bra) (34) 27.08.81
2 Thiago **SILVA** (Bra) (31) 22.09.84
23 Gregory **VAN DER WIEL** (Hol) (27) 03.02.88

MIDFIELDERS
11 Angel **DI MARIA** (Arg) (27) 14.02.88
7 **LUCAS** Moura (Bra) (23) 13.08.92
14 Blaise **MATUIDI** (28) 09.04.87
8 Thiago **MOTTA** (Ita) (33) 28.08.82
27 Javier **PASTORE** (Arg) (26) 20.06.89
25 Adrien **RABIOT** (20) 03.04.95
4 Benjamin **STAMBOULI** (25) 13.08.90
6 Marco **VERRATTI** (Ita) (23) 05.11.92

FORWARDS
29 Jean-Kevin **AUGUSTIN** (18) 16.06.97
9 Edinson **CAVANI** (Uru) (28) 14.02.87
10 Zlatan **IBRAHIMOVIC** (Swe) (34) 03.10.81
22 Ezequiel **LAVEZZI** (Arg) (30) 03.05.85
35 Hervin **ONGENDA** (20) 24.06.95

COACH
Laurent **BLANC** (50) 19.11.65

GUINGAMP

GOALKEEPERS
16 Theo **GUIVARC'H** (19) 17.11.95
1 Jonas **LOSSL** (Den) (26) 01.02.89
30 Mamadou **SAMASSA** (Mli) (25) 16.02.90

DEFENDERS
6 Maxime **BACA** (32) 02.06.83
3 Benjamin **ANGOUA** (IvC) (28) 28.11.86
2 Lars **JACOBSEN** (Den) (36) 20.09.79
29 Christophe **KERBRAT** (29) 02.08.86
25 Reynald **LEMAITRE** (32) 28.06.83
7 Dorian **LEVEQUE** (25) 22.11.89
15 Jeremy **SORBON** (32) 05.08.83

MIDFIELDERS
17 Julien **BEGUE** (22) 08.08.93
10 Nicolas **BENEZET** (24) 24.02.91
31 Ludovic **BLAS** (17) 31.12.97
22 Julien **CARDY** (34) 29.09.81
24 Marcus **COCO** (19) 24.06.96
5 Moustapha **DIALLO** (Sen) (29) 14.05.86
20 Laurent **DOS SANTOS** (22) 21.09.93
26 Thibault **GIRESSE** (34) 25.05.81
27 Franck **HERY** (22) 26.04.93
18 Lionel **MATHIS** (34) 04.10.81
19 Yannis **SALIBUR** (24) 24.01.91
13 Younousse **SANKHARE** (26) 10.09.89

FORWARDS
23 Jimmy **BRIAND** (30) 02.05.85
9 Mana **DEMBELE** (Mli) (26) 29.11.88
12 Niil **DE PAUW** (Blg) (25) 06.01.90
11 Sloan **PRIVAT** (26) 24.07.89

COACH
Jocelyn **GOURVENNEC** (43) 22.03.72

LILLE

GOALKEEPERS
30 Jean **BUTEZ** (20) 08.06.95
16 Steeve **ELANA** (Mar) (35) 11.07.80
1 Vincent **ENYEAMA** (Nga) (33) 29.08.82
40 Mike **MAIGNAN** (20) 03.07.95

DEFENDERS
25 Marko **BASA** (Mne) (32) 29.12.82
18 Franck **BERIA** (32) 23.05.83
5 Renato **CIVELLI** (Arg) (31) 14.10.83
2 Sebastien **CORCHIA** (25) 01.11.90
3 Youssouf **KONE** (Mli) (20) 05.07.95
28 Benjamin **PAVARD** (19) 28.03.96
19 Djibril **SIDIBE** (23) 29.07.92
23 Adama **SOUMAORO** (23) 18.06.92
13 Stoppila **SUNZU** (Zam) (26) 22.06.89

MIDFIELDERS
6 Ibrahim **AMADOU** (22) 06.04.93
26 Alexis **ARAUJO** (18) 07.12.96
4 Florent **BALMONT** (35) 02.02.80
11 Eric **BAUTHEAC** (28) 24.08.87
7 Sofiane **BOUFAL** (Mor) (22) 17.09.93
10 Marvin **MARTIN** (27) 10.06.88
24 Rio Antonio **MAVUBA** (31) 08.03.84
17 Souahilo **MEITE** (21) 17.03.94
15 Lenny **NANGIS** (21) 24.03.94
8 Mounir **OBBADI** (Mor) (32) 04.04.83

FORWARDS
9 Yassine **BENZIA** (21) 08.09.94
29 Michael **FREY** (Swi) (21) 19.07.94
27 Baptiste **GUILLAUME** (Blg) (20) 16.06.95
12 Sehrou **GUIRASSY** (19) 12.03.96
22 Junior **TALLO** (IvC) (22) 21.12.92
14 Yaw **YEBOAH** (Gha) (18) 28.03.97

COACH
Herve **RENARD** (47) 30.09.68

LORIENT

GOALKEEPERS
30 Florent **CHAIGNEAU** (31) 21.03.84
40 Benjamin **LECOMTE** (24) 26.04.91
16 Ibrahim **SY** (Sen) (20) 13.08.95

DEFENDERS
6 Francois **BELLUGOU** (28) 25.04.87
25 Lamine **GASSAMA** (Sen) (26) 20.10.89
14 Raphael **GUERREIRO** (Por) (21) 22.12.93
18 Hamadou **KARAMOKO** (20) 31.10.95
2 Lamine **KONE** (IvC) (26) 01.02.89
24 Wesley **LAUTOA** (NwC) (28) 25.08.87
4 Vincent **LE GOFF** (26) 15.10.89
29 Pape **PAYE** (25) 31.05.90
5 Zargo **TOURE** (Sen) (25) 11.11.89

MIDFIELDERS
13 Rafidine **ABDULLAH** (21) 15.01.94
28 Maxime **BARTHELME** (27) 08.09.88
20 Denis **BOUANGA** (20) 11.11.94
8 Yann **JOUFFRE** (31) 23.07.84
15 Remi **MULUMBA** (DRC) (23) 02.11.92
17 Walid **MESLOUB** (Alg) (30) 04.09.85
7 Didier **NDONG** (Gab) (21) 17.06.94
19 Romain **PHILIPPOTEAUX** (27) 02.03.88
21 Alain **TRAORE** (BuF) (26) 31.12.88

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23 Moryke **FOFANA** (IvC) (23) 23.11.91
11 Marvin **GAKPA** (22) 01.11.93
22 Benjamin **JEANNOT** (23) 22.01.92
31 Valentin **LAVIGNE** (21) 04.06.94
12 Benjamin **MOUKANDJO** (Cam) (26) 12.11.88
9 Majeed **WARIS** (Gha) (24) 19.09.91

COACH
Sylvain **RIPOLL** (44) 15.08.71

LYON

GOALKEEPERS
30 Mathieu **GORGELIN** (25) 05.08.90
1 Anthony **LOPES** (Por) (25) 01.10.90
16 Lucas **MOCIO** (21) 11.05.94

DEFENDERS
3 Henri **BEDIMO** (Cam) (31) 04.06.84
5 Milan **BISEVAC** (Ser) (32) 31.08.83
13 Christophe **JALLET** (32) 31.10.83
4 Bakari **KONE** (BuF) (27) 27.04.88
15 Jeremy **MOREL** (31) 02.04.84
20 **RAFAEL** (Bra) (25) 09.07.90
22 Lindsay **ROSE** (23) 08.02.92
23 Samuel **UMTITI** (21) 14.11.93
2 Mapou **YANGA-MBIWA** (26) 15.05.89

MIDFIELDERS
14 Sergi **DARDER** (Spa) (21) 22.12.93
18 Nabil **FEKIR** (22) 18.07.93
12 Jordan **FERRI** (23) 12.03.92
6 Gueida **FOFANA** (24) 16.05.91
11 Rachid **GHEZZAL** (Alg) (23) 09.05.92
21 Maxime **GONALONS** (26) 10.03.89
7 Clement **GRENIER** (24) 07.01.91
24 Olivier **KEMEN** (19) 20.07.96
32 Zakarie **LABIDI** (20) 08.02.95
17 Steed **MALBRANQUE** (35) 06.01.80
28 Arnold **MVUEMBA** (30) 28.01.85
8 Corentin **TOLISSO** (21) 03.08.94
29 Lucas **TOUSART** (18) 29.04.97
19 Mathieu **VALBUENA** (31) 28.09.84

FORWARDS
9 Claudio **BEAUVUE** (27) 16.04.88
27 Maxwel **CORNET** (19) 27.09.96
26 Aldo **KALULU** (19) 21.01.96
10 Alexandre **LACAZETTE** (24) 28.05.91

COACH
Hubert **FOURNIER** (48) 03.09.67

MARSEILLE

GOALKEEPERS
30 Steve **MANDANDA** (30) 28.03.85
16 Yohann **PELE** (33) 04.11.82

DEFENDERS
12 Gael **ANDONIAN** (Arm) (20) 07.02.95
25 Paolo **DE CEGLIE** (Ita) (29) 17.09.86
26 Brice **DJA DJEDJE** (IvC) (24) 23.12.90
2 Javi **MANQUILLO** (Spa) (21) 05.05.94
23 Benjamin **MENDY** (21) 17.07.94
3 Nicolas **NKOULOU** (Cam) (25) 27.03.90
4 Karim **REKIK** (Hol) (20) 02.12.94
6 **ROLANDO** (Por) (30) 31.08.85
15 Stephane **SPARAGNA** (20) 17.02.95

MIDFIELDERS
11 Romain **ALESSANDRINI** (26) 03.04.89
29 Andre-Frank Zambo **ANGUISSA** (Cam) (19) 16.11.95
19 Abdelaziz **BARRADA** (Mor) (26) 19.06.89
13 Remy **CABELLA** (25) 08.03.90
5 Abou **DIABY** (29) 11.05.86
10 Lassana **DIARRA** (30) 10.03.85
18 Mauricio **ISLA** (Chl) (27) 12.06.88
14 Georges-Kevin **NKOUDOU** (20) 13.02.95
7 Lucas **OCAMPOS** (Arg) (21) 11.07.94
20 Alaixys **ROMAO** (Tog) (31) 18.01.84
17 Bouna **SARR** (23) 31.01.92
8 Lucas **SILVA** (Bra) (22) 16.02.93

FORWARDS
22 Michy **BATSHUAYI** (Blg) (22) 02.10.93

COACH
Michel (**SPA**) (52) 23.03.62

REIMS

GOALKEEPERS
16 Kossi **AGASSA** (Tog) (37) 07.07.78
40 Cyriack **GAREL** (19) 13.07.96
30 Johnny **PLACIDE** (Hai) (27) 29.01.88

DEFENDERS
5 Gregory **BOURILLON** (31) 01.07.84
28 Antoine **CONTE** (21) 29.01.94
2 Mohamed **FOFANA** (Mli) (30) 07.03.85
23 Aissa **MANDI** (Alg) (24) 22.10.91
3 Franck **SIGNORINO** (34) 19.09.81
22 Mickael **TACALFRED** (34) 23.04.81
27 Hamary **TRAORE** (Mli) (23) 27.01.92
15 Atila **TURAN** (Tur) (23) 10.04.92
25 Anthony **WEBER** (28) 11.06.87

MIDFIELDERS
18 Frederic **BULOT** (Gab) (25) 27.09.90
6 Antoine **DEVAUX** (30) 21.02.85
11 **DIEGO** (Bra) (27) 09.03.88
4 Jaba **KANKAVA** (Geo) (29) 18.03.86
26 Omenuke **MFULU** (CDR) (23) 20.03.92
8 Prince **ONIANGUE** (Con) (27) 04.11.88
19 Alexi **PEUGET** (24) 18.12.90
21 Hugo **RODRIGUEZ** (24) 02.04.91

FORWARDS
10 Gaetan **CHARBONNIER** (26) 27.12.88
12 Nicolas **DE PREVILLE** (24) 08.01.91
7 Odair **FORTES** (CVI) (28) 31.03.87
29 Grejohn **KYEI** (20) 12.08.95
17 Aly **NDOM** (19) 30.05.96
24 David **N'GOG** (26) 01.04.89
20 Theoson Jordan **SIEBATCHEU** (19) 06.04.96

COACH
Olivier **GUEGAN** (43) 20.08.72

RENNES

GOALKEEPERS
1 Benoit **COSTIL** (28) 03.07.87
40 Abdoulaye **DIALLO** (Sen) (23) 30.03.92
30 Edvinas **GERTMONAS** (Lit) (19) 01.06.96
16 Olivier **SORIN** (34) 16.04.81

DEFENDERS
22 Sylvain **ARMAND** (35) 01.08.80
24 Ludovic **BAAL** (29) 24.05.86
19 Dimitri **CAVARE** (20) 05.02.95
29 Romain **DANZE** (29) 03.07.86
14 Fallou **DIAGNE** (Sen) (26) 14.08.89
3 Cheikh **M'BENGUE** (Sen) (27) 23.07.88
5 Pedro **MENDES** (Por) (25) 01.10.90
4 **MEXER** (Moz) (27) 08.09.88
12 Steven **MOREIRA** (21) 13.08.94
2 Mehdi **ZEFFANE** (Alg) (23) 19.05.92

MIDFIELDERS
21 Benjamin **ANDRE** (25) 03.08.90
17 Jeremie **BOGA** (18) 03.01.97
8 Abdoulaye **DOUCOURE** (22) 01.01.93
6 Gelson **FERNANDES** (Swi) (29) 02.09.86
9 Yoann **GOURCUFF** (29) 11.07.86
11 Juan **QUINTERO** (Col) (22) 18.01.93
20 Yacouba **SYLLA** (Mli) (24) 29.11.90

FORWARDS
10 Kamil **GROSICKI** (Pol) (27) 08.06.88
27 Habib **HABIBOU** (CAR) (28) 16.04.87
18 Pedro **HENRIQUE** (Bra) (25) 16.06.90
7 Paul-Georges **NTEP** (23) 29.07.92
13 Giovanni **SIO** (IvC) (26) 31.03.89

COACH
Philippe **MONTANIER** (50) 15.11.64

SAINT-ETIENNE

GOALKEEPERS
1 Anthony **MAISONNIAL** (17) 23.03.98
30 Jessy **MOULIN** (29) 13.01.86
16 Stephane **RUFFIER** (29) 27.09.86

DEFENDERS
32 Benoit **ASSOU-EKOTTO** (Cam) (31) 24.03.84
26 Moustapha **BAYAL SALL** (Sen) (29) 30.11.85
20 Jonathan **BRISON** (31) 07.12.83
29 Francois **CLERC** (32) 18.04.83
25 Kevin **MALCUIT** (24) 31.07.91
24 Loic **PERRIN** (30) 07.08.85
19 Florentin **POGBA** (Gui) (25) 19.08.90
3 Pierre-Yves **POLOMAT** (21) 27.12.93
2 Kevin **THEOPHILE-CATHERINE** (26) 28.10.89

MIDFIELDERS
6 Jeremy **CLEMENT** (31) 26.08.84
10 Renaud **COHADE** (31) 29.09.84
8 Benjamin **CORGNET** (28) 06.04.87
28 Ismael **DIOMANDE** (IvC) (23) 28.08.92
11 Valentin **EYSSERIC** (23) 25.03.92
21 Romain **HAMOUMA** (28) 29.03.87
18 Fabien **LEMOINE** (28) 16.03.87
5 Vincent **PAJOT** (25) 19.08.90
15 Erin **PINHEIRO** (CVI) (18) 15.07.97

FORWARDS
7 Jean-Christophe **BAHEBECK** (22) 01.05.93
17 Jonathan **BAMBA** (19) 26.03.96
27 Robert **BERIC** (Sln) (24) 17.06.91
14 Neal **MAUPAY** (19) 14.08.96
22 Kevin **MONNET-PAQUET** (27) 19.08.88
9 Nolan **ROUX** (27) 01.03.88

COACH
Christophe **GALTIER** (49) 28.08.66

TOULOUSE

GOALKEEPERS
30 Ali **AHAMADA** (24) 19.08.91
1 Mauro **GOICOECHEA** (Uru) (27) 27.03.88
16 Marc **VIDAL** (24) 03.06.91

DEFENDERS
7 Jean-Daniel **AKPA AKPRO** (IvC) (23) 11.10.92
3 Jean-Armel **KANA-BIYIK** (Cam) (26) 03.07.89
6 William **MATHEUS** (Bra) (25) 02.04.90
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21 Abel **AGUILAR** (Col) (30) 06.01.85
27 Alexis **BLIN** (19) 16.09.96
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8 Etienne **DIDOT** (32) 24.07.83
4 Tongo **DOUMBIA** (Mli) (26) 06.08.89
13 Zinedine **MACHACH** (19) 05.01.96
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28 Mihai **ROMAN** (Rom) (30) 16.11.84
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19 **SOMALIA** (Bra) (27) 28.09.88
18 Oscar **TREJO** (Arg) (27) 26.04.88

FORWARDS
12 Youssef **BENALI** (Mor) (20) 04.02.95
10 Wissam **BEN YEDDER** (24) 08.12.90
9 Martin **BRAITHWAITE** (Den) (24) 05.06.91
11 Aleksandar **PESIC** (Ser) (23) 21.05.92
25 Sana **ZANIOU** (BuF) (20) 31.12.94

COACH
Dominique **ARRIBAGE** (44) 11.05.71

TROYES

GOALKEEPERS
40 Paul **BERNARDONI** (18) 18.04.97
1 Matthieu **DREYER** (26) 20.03.89
16 Franck **GRANDEL** (Gdp) (37) 17.03.78
30 Denis **PETRIC** (Ser) (27) 24.05.88

DEFENDERS
33 Carlens **ARCUS** (Hai) (19) 28.06.96
22 Mory **KONE** (IvC) (21) 21.04.94
17 Guillaume **LACOUR** (35) 02.08.80
6 Jonathan **MARTINS PEREIRA** (29) 30.01.86
3 Chris **MAVINGA** (DRC) (24) 26.05.91
20 Mahamadou **N'DIAYE** (Mli) (25) 21.06.90
31 Anele **NGCONGCA** (SAf) (28) 21.10.87
11 **RINCON** (Bra) (28) 31.05.87
5 Matthieu **SAUNIER** (25) 07.02.90
32 Dusan **VESKOVAC** (Ser) (29) 16.03.86

MIDFIELDERS
4 Thomas **AYASSE** (28) 17.02.87
19 Karim **AZAMOUM** (25) 17.01.90
18 Chaouki **BEN SAADA** (Tun) (31) 01.07.84
23 Fabien **CAMUS** (Tun) (30) 28.02.85
34 Alois **CONFAIS** (19) 07.09.96
7 Yohan **COURT** (25) 14.01.90
8 Stephane **DARBION** (31) 22.03.84
24 Lossemy **KARABOUE** (27) 18.03.88
10 Benjamin **NIVET** (38) 02.01.77
29 Quentin **OTHON** (27) 27.03.88
25 Jessy **PI** (22) 24.09.93
14 Thiago **XAVIER** (Bra) (31) 27.12.83

FORWARDS
12 Henri **BIENVENU** (Cam) (27) 05.07.88
21 Jimmy **CABOT** (21) 18.04.94
15 Georges **GOPE-FENEPEJ** (NwC) (27) 23.10.88
9 Babacar **GUEYE** (Sen) (20) 31.12.94
26 Deniz **HUMMET** (Tur) (19) 13.09.96
27 Corentin **JEAN** (20) 15.07.95
13 Brayan **PEREA** (Col) (22) 25.02.93

COACH
Jean-Marc **FURLAN** (57) 20.11.57

(ages as of 06.11.15)

World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

JUNE 21, 2000, BRUGES: EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Spain 4 Yugoslavia 3

Seven goals are shared at the Jan Breydel Stadion as Spain edge out Yugoslavia in a thrilling encounter

Late show...Alfonso (no 11, centre) celebrates his last-gasp goal

There was everything to play for as Group C entered its final round of games, with all four sides still able to progress to the Euro quarter-finals. And as Gavin Hamilton wrote in *World Soccer*'s July 2000 edition: "The European Championships have produced some memorable games. But nothing quite like this.

"Spain, a goal down in injury time looked to be heading out. Another tournament, another disappointing performance from a team who had promised much but delivered little.

"Then, just before the lights were turned out on Spain's tournament, they came roaring back to life, scoring twice in a matter of minutes to pull off one of the most remarkable comebacks seen in international football.

"Alfonso's winning goal took Spain into the quarter-finals at the expense of Norway, whose goalless draw with Slovenia sent them out as Yugoslavia, who thought they had thrown it all away, were handed a lifeline into the last eight."

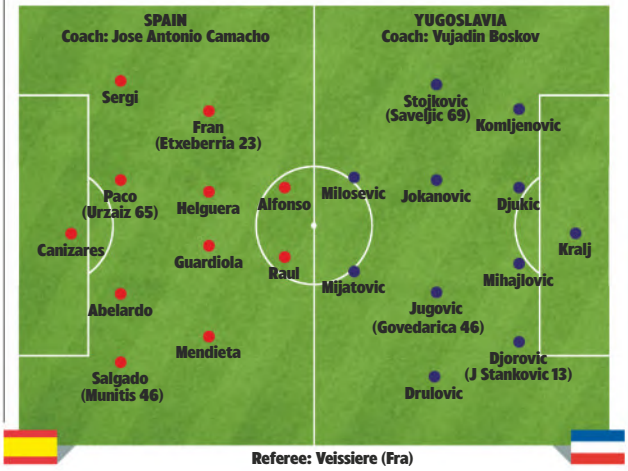
At 2-2, Yugoslavia were reduced to 10 men and "the tide appeared to be turning in Spain's favour" according to Hamilton. And when Yugoslavia took the lead for a third time it was pointed out that "at times like this in the past, Spanish sides had cracked under the pressure".

Hamilton went on to say: "To the credit of coach Camacho, his team mounted a spirited challenge, besieging the Yugoslav goal for the remainder of the match, but it looked like Yugoslavia would hold out."

However, the pressure finally told as Pedro Munitis won a penalty, which was converted by Gaizka Mendieta, and Alfonso scored the winner in the sixth minute of injury time.

Both sides went out in the quarter-finals, with France eventually beating Italy in the Final. WS

Battle...Paco (left) and Predrag Mijatovic



Referee: Veissiere (Fra)

KEY MOMENTS

Level...Alfonso scores Spain's first goal

31min Savo Milosevic rises above two defenders to head home a cross from Ljubinko Drulovic. **0-1**

39min Raul works an opening on the edge of the box and Alfonso pulls Spain level. **1-1**

51min A shot from the edge of the area by sub Dejan Govedarica, following a pass from Drulovic, restores Yugoslavia's lead. **1-2**

52min The scores are level again as Pedro Munitis curls a fine effort in off the post. **2-2**

63min Yugoslavia are reduced to ten men as Slavisa Jokanovic receives a second yellow card and is sent off.

73min Predrag Mijatovic misses a great chance when he blasts over the bar from close range.

75min Sinisa Mihajlovic plays the ball into the penalty area and Slobodan Komljenovic stabs the ball past keeper Santiago Canizares. **2-3**

On target...Slobodan Komljenovic (left)

90min Abelardo is fouled in the area and Gaizka Mendieta scores from the penalty spot. **3-3**

90+6min A long ball into the Yugoslavia area in the last minute of added time is volleyed in by Alfonso to win the game. **4-3**

Winner...Alfonso volleys home

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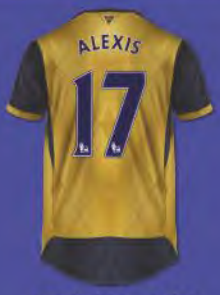

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